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Editorial

Dollar Imperialism

SOME months ago, writing of literature, I said that to open the door to American influence is to let in a fatal stream of sentimentality. I should now like to say something about our relations, generally, with the United States. There is no such thing as gratitude between nations (and very little between persons) but it does seem to me that most of us are remarkably ungracious, to say the least of it, about the help given to us by the Americans. One of the most alarming features of our present condition is the eagerness with which people will snap up and repeat slogans, applying them as if they explained everything, without examining their meaning, if any, or wondering who first produced them. 'Collective Security' and 'Peace is Indivisible' are two examples from the recent past, 'Dollar Imperialism' and 'Coca-colonisation' from the present.

Two plain undeniable facts about Western Europe today are, firstly, that the main reasons why the Russians have not taken over (either directly or through agents) the whole area is the Americans' possession of the atom bomb and the Americans' determination to fight for Europe, and, secondly, that the main factor in European recovery has been the willingness of American taxpayers to give away large sums of money. It is quite easy to see why the Communists and their half-baked supporters should call this determination and generosity 'dollar imperialism'. It is not quite so easy to see why so many people who owe their safety and comfort (however precarious) to the Americans should be so offensive. Of course it is not really so uncommon to bite the hand that feeds you; there is something very galling about accepting charity, especially if you consider your benefactor to be less cultured, enlightened and deserving than yourself. There is also plain envy, the impotent anger of the new poor at the rich who can still travel first-class. For people of the Left in this country there is, as well, a permanent sense of grievance—extraordinary when you think of it—against the Capitalist country which cheerfully financed six years of Socialist experiment. There is also a natural dislike on the part of many educated Europeans for the American way of life as American commercialism chooses to present it in magazines and films; the fact that a very large section of the population clearly approves of it only increases their dislike. And finally, and more respectably, there must be a feeling of wounded pride amongst people with a great tradition like the French and ourselves, a resentment against dependence on a country which has gained great advantages from the two wars which ruined us.

And so it is there is a section of Europe which is prepared to accept the slogan 'dollar imperialism' at its face value and to repeat silly malicious stories about the Americans. Of course, there are discreditable stories about the Americans—they tell them themselves in public inquiries.

The Americans have their faults, and have done some very foolish things, no doubt. Their peculiar political system makes their foreign policy very susceptible to the changes in an erratic public opinion. They like quick and if possible spectacular solutions to problems which we know will take years to solve, if they can be solved at all. It is for this reason, as well as the more obvious ones, that I do not for a moment suggest that we should repay American generosity by surrendering to them the control of the affairs of Europe. This I should say, without I hope undue pride or offending the French, is a part for which Britain is pre-eminently suited, and it is, I think, a serious criticism of Britain's foreign policy since the war that she has failed to undertake such responsibility.

DESMOND FITZGERALD

THE VERSE PLAYS OF CHRISTOPHER FRY

EVERYONE is glad that Christopher Fry should have a popular success in the theatre, but I feel doubtful whenever I see this success referred to as a renaissance or the appearance of a new Elizabethan overflowing with vitality and verbal ingenuity, intoxicated with words, etc., etc. That Fry is intoxicated with words I should agree, but his plays (with one exception) look not forward, but back, to a type of poetic drama which was also intoxicated, but mildly, and which tried, and failed gallantly, thirty to fifty years ago. For lack of a better word, I call it Georgian; it emerged from the tragedies written by Stephen Phillips and others for Tree and the old Bensonians who had been trained to a rich delivery of verse in costume, it floundered heavily through the Celtic Revival and its last exponents were Gordon Bottomley and Lascelles Abercrombie. Fry's comedies, I think, are the tail-end on this Georgian movement. To take the burning question of language alone, which of the following passages were written by Christopher Fry?

(1) I know that children wound us, and surprise
Even to utter death, till we at last
Turn from a face to flowers.

(2) But the hand
Still leads the earth to drink at the sky and still
The messenger rides into the city of leaves
Under the gradual fires of September.

(3) Come on
Your second sight is not worth waiting for:
You had better see your own ghost lighting fires
For that is all you are worth. Come on.

(4) I love myself
And I shall be sad to say good-bye to myself;
There's no one like me, though so many better.
Will you kiss the last of a singular man?

(5) Many of them never seem to understand
That Man's a fighting animal. They're afraid
Dreadfully afraid, of the sight of blood.
I think it's a beautiful colour, beautiful!
You know, in the Old Testament they used
To splash it on the door-posts.

(6) I am loved and longed for in every garrison
Between here and Rome, being an easy man
Towards all sizes and patterns of petticoats;
And though you are foodless, coinless, roofless and shigged
I am kind and have left you both without muzzle or bit
So long as you have talked comfortably to her
Dripping good advice like a worn-out spigot
With the cask's lees behind it on her hard mind.

(7) SHALE: Where's the joker? You, is it? Here's hot news
You brought us; all the valley's hissing aloud,
And makes as much of you falling into it
As a pail of water would of a glowing coal.
SOLLERS: Don't you start burbling too, Shale.
SHALE: That's the word: burbling, simmering, ay, and bumpy-boiling.
All the women are mobbed together close
Under the witan tree, and their full minds
Boil like so many pans slung on the fire,
Why, starlings trooping in a copse in fall
Could make no scandal like it.

4

MERRICK: What is it, man?
SHALE: End of the world! The flying star! End of the world!

(8) NICHOLAS: You slawsy poodle, you tike,
You crapulous puddering pip-squeak! Do I have to kill you
A second time? What about the stars?
HUMPHREY: All right:
What about the stars? They flicker and flicker like hell's
Light they flicker.
MARGARET: The chaplain is tuning his G string by the bells.
It must be time for prayers. It must be time
For something. You're both transfigured by dirt.
THOMAS: Where in thunder is the mayor? Are you deaf to the baying
Of those bib-and-tuckered blood-hounds out in the street?
I want to be hanged.

(9) Valleys
Vocal with angelic rilling of rocky streams
By rambling country lanes, with hazel and thorn embowered
Woodbine, bryony and wild roses

(10) If you could have seen in your embryonic eye
The realm of bryony, sloes, rose-hips,
And a hedge's ruin, a golden desuetude
A countryside like a drowned angel
Lying in shallow water, with every thorn tendering a tear.

---

(1) is from Stephen Phillips's *Paolo and Francesca* (1900).
(2) from Fry's *Boy With a Cart* (1937).
(3) from Gordon Bottomley's *Gruach* (1921).
(4) from *Venus Observed.*
(5) from Alfred Noyes's extraordinary *Rada* (1915).
(6) from Bottomley's *Britain's Daughter* (1921).
(7) from Lascelles Abercrombie's *End of the World* (1922).
(8) from *The Lady's Not For Burning.*
(9) from Robert Bridges's *Testament of Beauty* (not, of course, a play), and
(10) from *Venus Observed* shows how Fry has screwed or pepped up Georgian verse.

The resemblance of *tone* between all these quotations is quite unmistakable. Of course, in a long passage of Fry's you will notice the forty years' difference in style, the process which Bridges called 'rambling in loose alexandrins' having in that time been keyed up by Auden to platform rhetoric and quietly and relentlessly flattened by T. S. Eliot. Fry himself called his *Boy With A Cart* an exercise in Eliot's style, and so it was, still its home-spun Women's Institute Georgian cut was unmistakable. The principle of this kind of verse is *diffusion*, the thought always being softened, blurred, shied away from, made acceptable by consciously poetic devices. From a vintage Georgian verse drama we must also expect:

1. The semi-mythical subject (in the early 1900's under the powerful influence of Yeats and Maeterlinck these were usually Celtic).

2. The absence of any real dramatic interaction between the characters who spend a great deal of time mourning and lamenting (again the fatal Irish influence) and looking out of the window (bright blue backdrop) watching for other people coming.[1]

Nearly all the action takes place off-stage; an attempt is made to compensate for this by several 'quarrelling scenes' which, however, leave things much as they were before.

3. *The appearance of a mother*, or Queen mother, who speaks wisely and calmly, and generally represents the appeal to common sense, practicality and even humour. This figure was dear, of course, to all the Irish playwrights, but also to Maeterlinck, Bottomley and Phillips; Fry has introduced her into *The Lady's Not For Burning* as well as *The Firstborn* and Eliot into *Family Reunion* and *The Cocktail Party* (Julia).

4. The plain speaking mother makes it much easier to introduce the atmosphere

[1] *The Queen:* She is coming under full sail. . . . *The King:* I cannot see clearly, there is so much mist. . . .
The Queen: They are rowing . . . They are all rowing . . . They mean to come right up to the castle windows . . .
This opening of Maeterlinck's *Seven Princesses* (translated by Sutro) may stand for a good many others.

of *whimsical self-deprecation* which is the hall-mark of Georgian literature, having become irresistible with Robert Louis Stevenson and later with Barrie's wonderfully theatrical plays. When this self-deprecation, which has been for six hundred years very much to the taste of the English public, joined forces with the cult of religious humility in T. S. Eliot, it became formidable indeed—invaluable, too, in turning away the edge of sincerity that might become an embarrassment.

In *The Lady's Not For Burning* no lines were more popular than Margaret's

Sin is so inconvenient

and

I have always been sure
That when it [i.e. the Day of judgment]
comes it will come in the autumn
Heaven, I am quite sure, wouldn't disappoint
The bulbs!

while in the foreword to the published edition the reader is frankly told that it will be more helpful if he thinks of the comedy in terms of light, of inconstant April sunshine, of sunset, twilight and full moon.

If we don't recognise where we have heard Fry's earlier plays before, it is because we have forgotten so completely these poetic dramas of the day before yesterday. A good working description of a production of this kind is given in Arnold Bennett's *The Regent* (1913). Edward Henry Machin, the 'Card' from the Five Towns, is on a visit to London to escape the spring-cleaning and after several comedy scenes in fashionable restaurants, etc. (this is not one of Bennett's best books) is introduced to Miss Rose Euclid, the actress, and Mr. Carlo Trent, the celebrated dramatic poet. Trent wears a soft shirt and has a 'lah-di-dah' accent. He inveigles Machin into putting up the money for a new venture, The Intellectual Theatre (later The Regent) which will support the Intellectual Drama. At the word 'intellectual', Bennett says that Edward Henry feels quite faint. He is reassured, however, by the thought that there is 'money in the poetical drama' and by the long run of Stephen Phillips's plays. He immediately acquires a site for £4,500 and the theatre goes up in six months. Sir John Pilgrim, one of the 'glorious race of actor-managers' agrees to lay the corner-stone, and Carlo Trent produces his new verse play 'The Orient Pearl'. 'For some thirty minutes Edward Henry listened to hexameters, the first he had ever heard. The effect of them on his moral organism was worse than he had expected . . . But just as his desperation was becoming too acute to be borne, Carlo Trent ejaculated the word "Curtain". It was the first word that Edward Henry had clearly understood.'

Before he can recover from the shock of the verse play, Edward Henry is bowled over by a pretty young actress called Elsie April. She introduces him to The Azure Society 'an offspring of the New Thought', where he is disgusted by the 'anti-representational' scenery—a purple forest and crimson castle. Practically everybody in the audience is a suffragette, and the play turns out to be 'The Orient Pearl' once more, this time called 'The New Don Juan'. At last, however, 'The Orient Pearl' goes into production at the Regent, and although Rose Euclid is unsatisfactory, becoming 'totally inarticulate, raving away there and struggling in a cocoon of hexameters', the reception on the first night is enthusiastic. But after this, business falls off and only recovers when The Card engages a militant suffragette to play one of the parts.

'It'll have run for a hundred and one nights', said Edward Henry, jealous for reputations, including his own. 'And right through August, too! No modern poetry play ever run as long in London, and no other ever will. I've given the intellectual theatre the biggest ad. it ever had. And I've made money on it!'

In *The Regent* you can trace the beginning of the end for the middle-class reading public. The Card still has sturdy independence enough to be bored by 'The Orient Pearl' and to admit that he is bored; on the other hand, he has been led into supporting not something which he considers a work of art but something which he dislikes and which actually makes him feel faint. In time the increasing difficulty of modern art will drive the public into 'giving up' completely, accepting with feeble gratitude all that a hierarchy of

established critics recommend and handing over the question of patronage with relief to the Arts Council.[1] The *Salon des Refusés* will cease to have meaning because no one will dare to refuse anything. By this time the slow development of public taste will cause the average audience to feel reasonably happy and at home, at the end of the 1940's, with 'The Orient Pearl'. Fortunately for them, the theatre is ready with *The Lady's Not For Burning* again, with starred performers in the cast.

Fry's comedies, then, don't represent a renaissance in the theatre so much as a graceful return to the lax and rambling verse drama of the period 1900–25. Well may nostalgia seize us since this was the last period when the poet and his public could fairly be said to be *en rapport.* (Housman and Rupert Brooke were probably the last poets whose work was bought and read for pleasure and without any undertone of conscientiousness or 'keeping up'.)

And if Fry's plays suggest to me the 'cocoon of hexameters' in 'The Orient Pearl', it is because similar causes produce similar effects. Poetry of the amplification kind, which spins the thought out rather thin or repeats it in a number of different ways, is not more difficult, but easier to write (without stopping) than prose, and this temptation not to stop seems to afflict Fry in precisely (if that is the right word) the same way as it did Bottomley and Phillips. It also afflicted the Elizabethans, so that it is in this way and no other that Fry resembles Christopher Marlowe.

All this does not take away from the debt which we owe to Fry for maintaining interest in the poetic drama. And, more important still, in *A Sleep of Prisoners* (first produced at Oxford in 1951) he appeared for the first time to be writing a play which was not a pastiche but which came to grips with immense difficulties. It was too elaborate for anyone to follow properly and spiritual truths were still shuffled out in a deprecating way ('it's what they call flesh we're in') like photographs of the kiddies out of a wallet. There were scenes which did not come off and others which recalled those depressing programmes on the Four Freedoms which used to be ground out by the Home Service. But the action was strongly handled and not avoided or passed off, most of the whimsicality had vanished and a new and welcome tension appeared in speech after speech.

'Now
The nightmare sits and eats with me
He was boy enough.
Why does he look like a thief?'

A Sleep of Prisoners was written for performance in church; the pews were hard; it had a limited success only, but deserved much more.

In my opinion the only play which, since *Murder in the Cathedral,* has justified the hope of poetry in the theatre was Donough McDonough's *Happy as Larry.* The great merit of this play was obscured by the dreadfully determined Irishness of the production. But *A Sleep of Prisoners* showed that Fry could build on his success to turn himself into a serious poet. That is why I think it was particularly unfortunate that the Arts Theatre should begin their new venture at the Winter Garden with *The Firstborn.* I know nothing about the negotiations that went on behind the scenes, but it seemed possible that Fry had been pressed for a new play to open the season and, having nothing on hand, agreed to remodel *The Firstborn* instead. It would have been better to wait, for this tragedy of the Plagues of Egypt in which, incredible as it seems, Moses never confronts Pharaoh squarely, is a wishy-washy piece of exactly the kind I have been describing. Just as one can hardly believe that Phillips will write a whole play about Paolo and Francesca without one moment of genuine shame, guilt or passion, so it doesn't seem possible that Fry can make the story of Moses and Pharaoh undramatic, yet, in the end, he does it. As in *The Lady's Not For Burning,* the dramatic point is the clash with authority, yet in both cases (the Mayor and Pharaoh) the authority is made so weak and unsure of itself that the clash dissolves away into endless words. And Fry is a professional actor! Surely with this immeasurable advantage he can leave the cocoon stage and continue the difficult experiment which he began with *A Sleep of Prisoners.*

D. & P. M. FITZGERALD

[1]Julien Gracq has suggested in an article translated in last month's *World Review* that the Surrealist period was the last time when the public 'saved its honour' by resisting.

Notes

FRANCE

The French *malaise* is rapidly becoming a *maladie*. One looks in vain for political or economic stability. Leadership there is, but no response to it; resources but faulty exploitation; plans but no implementation. In the meantime governments and francs fall with monotonous regularity.

The worst aspect of the growing crisis is the mass withdrawal from social responsibility. Tax evasion has been calculated to amount to £400 million a year—more than the budget deficit. The seven million smallholders and agricultural labourers—a third of the working population—show increasing signs of retiring into sullen self-sufficiency. The vast hydro-electric and industrial projects, which are being built with the help of Marshall Aid funds in the Rhône Valley and Lorraine, contrast with the pig-headed inefficiency of the smaller firms they are designed to assist. The French production index is still only slightly higher than the previous peak in 1929, and thousands of private and public firms are salting away their profits in specie and bullion instead of refreshing the economy with new funds. Industry in France is more remarkable for its social problems than its economic products.

The trouble with the National Assembly is not that it is unrepresentative of the nation—in spite of what looked suspiciously like gerrymandering at the last election—but that it represents the French only too well. The Frenchman is an anarchist and the only antidote to Anarchy is Order. Unless the Third Force at present in power takes its courage into both hands and institutes constitutional reforms devised to provide a strong executive, they may find the work taken out of their hands. There are strong rival claimants—one to the Left and one to the Right.

THE CARIBBEAN

There is a pleasant irony about the political advancement of the British possessions in the Caribbean apparently obliging the United States to take liberalising steps in its colony of Puerto Rico. Both Trinidad and Jamaica have now reached the penultimate stage before full self-government—although this still begs the question of a West Indian Federation—and in this area the British Colonial Office has been more than true to its modern theory that when enough local inhabitants of sufficient calibre appear ready to accept the duties of political independence, they should get it.

Now that its half-million voters have approved the new constitution in the referendum held at the beginning of March, the 100-mile-long island discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1493 will in due course become the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. It will become self-governing in internal affairs, although U.S. Federal law and courts will still operate and the island will remain within the American tariff system. The constitution must now be laid before President Truman, who will satisfy himself that it guarantees a republican form of government and contains a bill of rights. He will then submit it to Congress for ratification, when it will become operative within sixty days. The Anglo-Saxon countries may well be satisfied that their enlightened approach to the problems of the Caribbean will remove the word 'colonialism' from the vocabulary of local political agitators.

THE BALTIC STATES

Information from the victims of Soviet aggression diminishes in proportion to the length of their subjection. Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia are not only completely closed to the outside world, but also forbidden to Russians, who may not travel freely in the Baltic Soviet Republics. Mass deportations, collectivisation of land and requisitioning of food have lowered the level of the agricultural economy, and the standard of living has been reduced to that of the Soviet Union. Very little reconstruction work has been done in the war-ravaged cities, and industrial centres, like Tallin and Riga, cut off from the outside

world, work but haltingly for the Soviet economy.

Security measures are savage. The forbidden area stretches from twenty miles inland to twelve miles out to sea. Guards are put on all fishing boats and the coast is patrolled by aeroplanes and light craft. The whole region has been reorganised as part of the Soviet defence system. The Gulf of Finland is now guarded from both sides at Porkkala and Tallin-Palidski. Along the coast, the pre-1914 forts and coastal batteries have been re-established. The approaches to Riga have been fortified and a large air-base constructed. The port of Libau is now an important naval base, with a heavy cruiser squadron and repair facilities for vessels up to 20,000 tons. Memel is a submarine base and Kaliningrad, the former Koenigsberg in German Eastern Prussia, has also had its naval facilities reconstructed. Many airfields have been constructed and the area is used for extensive military training. With Western rearmament placing a different aspect on the value of the Elbe line, the Russians are turning the Baltic states into their main reserve mobilisation area.

AUSTRIA

Embedded in the very centre of the Iron Curtain, Austria continues to provide a surprising picture of near-normality amidst the tribulations of the Cold War. Austrians in the Russian Zone have free access not only to the other zones of occupation but also to any Western country. The Austrian government writ runs throughout the country and it controls the police and the judiciary. Goods move freely between the four zones. In contrast to Germany, there is a unified standard of living and elections are free and secret. In spite of Soviet blandishments, there are only five Communist deputies out of 165, and the party is powerless as it needs seven members to initiate a bill.

There are various reasons for this curious case of Soviet passivity. Their zone is small with only just over two and a quarter million inhabitants. It is mainly agricultural and half of what industry there is was seized by the Russians at the end of the war as Nazi property. The oil wells at Zistersdorf are also in Soviet hands. There is little more they could gain even by agitation, and the population is hardly large enough to repay indoctrination.

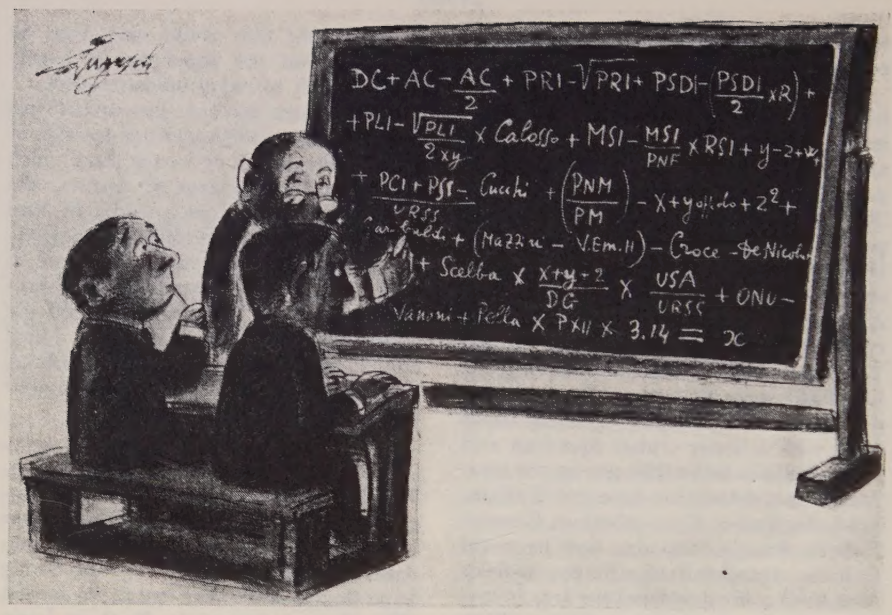
The Russians also have the curious Nazi habit of acknowledging written treaties, or at least using them as a basis from which to depart. In the case of Austria, the country was treated as a victim of Nazi aggression, and a State treaty signed before the Eastern and Western allies came to blows. There has been an Austrian government since 1945, and its laws need the approval of only one of the four Allied High Commissioners. Short of naked force, there is little the Russians can do to alter the situation.

LATIN AMERICA

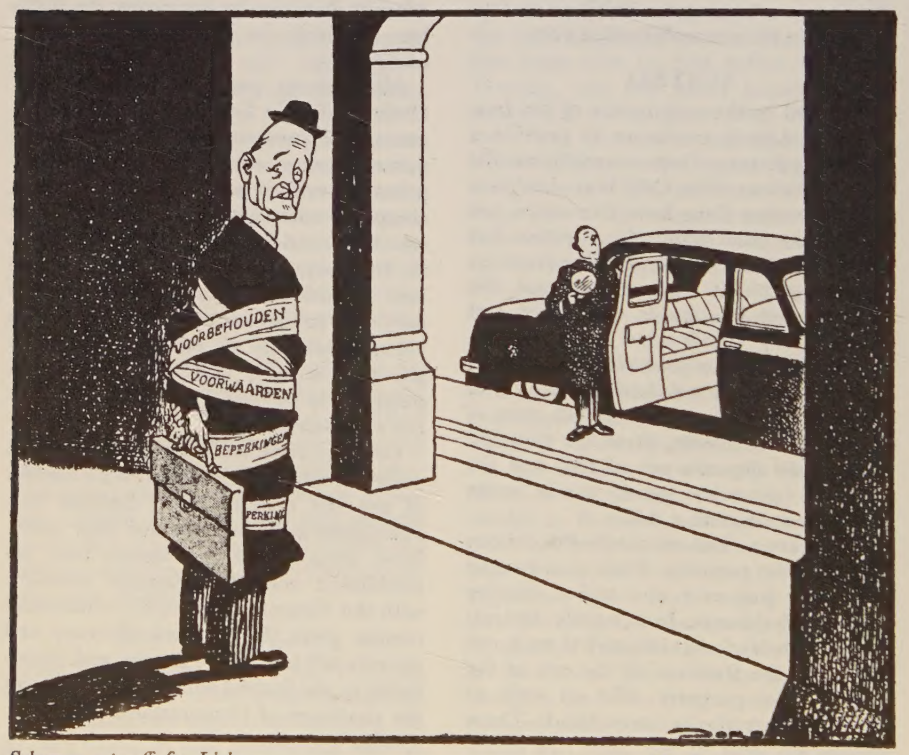
The Vatican is viewing with rising concern the encroachments of Communism in the strong Catholic enclave of Latin America. During March, the world-wide 'Apostleship of Prayer' had as its subject 'The Preservation of the Faith in Latin America', and a considerable effort is being made to counter the spread of Marxist doctrines by increasing the number of clergy in the South American countries.

Although 35 per cent of the world's Catholics live in Latin America, the area contains only seven per cent of the Catholic priests. In many countries there is only one priest for every 7,000 declared Catholics, compared with the one to every thousand which is considered the ideal rate. Even in Uruguay, where communications are well organised, many village Catholics only see a priest once every five years. This vacuum has only too often been filled by the Communists, and they have been particularly successful in Bolivia, Colombia and Guatemala.

Catholic influence in Latin America has suffered many vicissitudes since the middle of the last century when Spanish and Portuguese influences reached their nadir. Now, although all but Mexico have re-established cordial diplomatic relations with the Vatican, the Church's difficulties remain great. Widespread illiteracy and poverty still have to be fought, and ministering to the faithful will not by itself meet the challenge of Communism.



This is the Italian political situation: it's quite simple — *Candido* (Italy)



Schuman sets off for Lisbon — *Het Parool* (Netherlands)

France 'entre chien et ours'

Die Weltwoche (Switzerland)

But he looked so small in Persia

Nebelspalter (Switzerland)

The new Atlantic Wall

Die Nation (Switzerland)

Too much still on paper

Der Fortshritt (Germany)

A dialogue on Britain's economic situation

THE NARROW ROAD

ROY HARROD

Britannicus: These are sad days. It is terrible to think to what a pass the country has come. Do you see any light?

Œconomicus: I am not quite so gloomy as you appear to be. Basically, I do not think things are very bad; rather the contrary. It is a question of continuous mismanagement by the authorities and a succession of grave mistakes in recent years. Technically we are in a very awkward position, and this may indeed have lamentable effects on our world-wide connections. It is a question now of getting the right technical answer.

Britannicus: How like an economist! He is so wrapped up in his technical problems that he cannot see the broad position. The fact of the matter is that the country has gone slack and that the people are not working. There is no remedy for that at a merely technical level.

Œconomicus: I know that that is often said, but I am not so sure. There are bad patches of slackness, particularly in trades that catch the public eye. But I believe that work is proceeding pretty vigorously inside the factories up and down the country; that at least is the record from such soundings as I have been able to make. Of course it would be a good thing if people worked harder still; the harder they work, the higher the standard of living that they can enjoy. We want to see a higher standard of living in this country. We should emulate the Americans.

Britannicus: It is not a question of raising the standard of living. The standard of living will have to come right down.

Œconomicus: Well, it is coming down now. We are being cut off from imported foods; the supply of television sets, etc., is to be reduced; everyone will feel these things in the course of the year.

But there is one thing that I should like to point out about these restrictions. They may be necessary at the moment, but if, as I hope you will agree, the prime evil is inflationary pressure, it is to be noted that import cuts are no cure. On the contrary, they will make inflationary pressure worse. Purchasing power, denied a vent in these directions, will pile up and increase the pressure in the remainder of the economy.

Britannicus: That purchasing power must be mopped up.

Œconomicus: By higher taxes, you mean?

Britannicus: It would be better to cut the food subsidies.

Œconomicus: I doubt if it would be thought fair to take such a measure in isolation. A cut in the food subsidies would only be acceptable if it was offset by other reliefs—but then it would not serve your purpose—or if it was part of a range of measures, including higher taxes, to increase the burdens all round. It may well be that the middle classes have had an unfair share of the burden in recent times. But each new round of measures is considered on its own merits.

Mind you, we may all have to shoulder heavier burdens for a different reason. If the cost of re-armament rises in the coming year, that will have to be faced. But that will be something further and additional to our present difficulties. Do you propose more taxes to finance the higher defence expenditure, and, in addition, higher taxes to take the existing amount of inflation out of the system?

Britannicus: It certainly seems hard.

Œconomicus: What it would amount to is that we should not only be expected to pay our way at a time of quite abnormal expenditure, but also to have an increase in taxation on top of that. Is not that a little odd? Does it seem regular and proper that in such hard and disappointing times the taxpayers should have to pay extra taxes in addition to what has to be found for re-armament? I need not point out the evil effect of taxation, even at its present level. Is there not something a little phoney in this proposal?

Britannicus: You are asking me. I thought it would be you who would enlighten us.

A very drastic reduction of capital expenditure

Œconomicus: Oh, well, my ideas are quite clear-cut on this subject. I have been urging them for some time. I am in favour of a very drastic reduction of capital expenditure. In my judgment we should revert to a principle that was applied automatically until very recent times, namely that the capital expenditure of the country should not run ahead of the savings that people are making. It was always recognised in the old days that the productivity of the country was able to go from strength to strength only because people were thrifty and thus provided the wherewithal. Thrift was the *sine qua non.* It was never suggested that, if people ceased to be thrifty, the country could forge ahead with its capital expansion just the same. The principle was enforced in practice by the Bank of England. If capital expansion was running ahead of saving, it very quickly tightened credit and checked that expansion. It had to do so in its own interest, because, if inflation was allowed to gather momentum, it would itself become insolvent. The fact that our system is now altered so that the Bank of England is no longer subject to the old pressures, and does not have to transmit them to the economy at large, does not exempt us from the duty of keeping capital outlay within the limit of our savings. We must find another method of doing that.

Britannicus: That is a very interesting story, but I thought that the adverse balance of trade was our central problem. You seem to be running away from it, and indulging in irrelevant speculations.

Œconomicus: I am not running away from it. I am going right at it. The overspending on capital account and the adverse balance of trade are simply two aspects of one and the same thing. The adverse balance of trade means that the nation is overspending, but this must mean that one or other of the constituent parts of the nation, individuals, companies, government agencies, are spending beyond their income. We know that government agencies at present are not doing that. Most individuals just cannot. The overspending arises on capital account. It has been going on for some time. In recent years this has been covered by large budget surpluses, which may be regarded as a form of compulsory collective saving, which was added to the sum total of private saving. That surplus has been reduced by re-armament expenditure. That was why I asked whether you proposed to build it up again by new taxes over and above those required for re-armament. If you do not and also do nothing else about this matter of capital expenditure, you will infallibly have an adverse balance of trade. You may correct it for a short time by import cuts or measures to expand exports, but so long as you have this internal excess of spending, this inflationary pressure will spill over and make your external balance adverse again, despite all your measures.

The Bank of England

Just another word about the Bank of England in the old days. What happened then was that, when there was overspending on capital account, the trade balance automatically became adverse and the Bank of England was subjected to a drain of gold. That forced it to take measures to correct the overspending on capital account. And those were effective as regards the balance of trade. No one suggested that the Bank could be quite unable to protect its gold position without having powers to interfere with imports or exports directly. It relied on its power to check capital expenditure, and the external balance of trade came right by consequence automatically. It was a logical system, and it worked. There were objections to it, and it has been in suspense. But while it is in suspense, we have to adopt other measures to check the overspending. We shall never get the balance of trade right unless capital expenditure is reduced or saving increased, so that the latter is sufficient to cover the former.

Britannicus: Well then, saving must be increased. It would be the height of folly to reduce capital expenditure, considering that the future productivity and prosperity of the nation depend on just that. It is surprising that an economist should recommend such an imprudent course.

Saving must be increased

Œconomicus: I will come back to the question of its imprudence in a moment. I will only point out that, if you do not like my plan, you are inevitably committed to the huge load of extra taxation. And I beg leave to doubt whether, even if you push that policy to the utmost extreme, you will get what you want. If our capital expenditure is running ahead of saving now by £400 million, to take a merely illustrative figure that has no claim to statistical accuracy, you would need not only to put on extra taxes for increased armament expenditure, but considerably more than £400 million's worth of further extra taxes as well, the reason being that, as you increase the taxes, you will further depress the voluntary savings of individuals. You might have to add on £600 million of additional budget surplus over and above what we have already, to get net extra saving of £400 million.

There is yet another point in this connection. While I do think it is useful to employ the measure of money in these connections, and that the fashion against thinking of things in terms of money has gone much too far, yet we may keep in mind the other side also. The physical resources released by such a heroic attack on consumer standards would not be those in regard to which inflationary pressure is now most intense. Less might be spent on tobacco, cinemas, football pools; all that would not be very helpful for the arms drive.

This idea that you can have as much capital expenditure as you please in the interest of the country and make up its excess over private saving by compulsory budgetary saving is a new one. We have managed to make it work up to a point by denying our citizens the tax relief which they would normally have got as expenditure connected with the war fell away. It does not follow that we could step it up further with success in the circumstances of today. It would mean pushing this new recipe to a great extreme. I should be chary of doing so until we have had longer experience of it.

What I do ask you to accept, however, is that we can only get the balance of trade straight, either by reducing capital expenditure, or by increasing saving.

Britannicus: I must bow to the economist on this point.

Œconomicus: That is a most important concession. If only the Treasury boys would grasp this idea firmly and act on it, I am confident that we should be out of our worst embarrassments quite soon.

Reculer pour mieux sauter

But I must take up your point about future productivity. I am all in favour of increasing capital expenditure as and when savings are sufficient. At this moment it is a question of *reculer pour mieux sauter.* I would have a great reduction of capital outlay now; I should hope that this would have a thoroughly disinflationary effect, leading before long to lower prices and the possibility of lower taxes. I should hope that the motives and means for private saving would be revived, and that we could then see capital expansion firmly based on the savings of individuals and companies. I suggest the analogy of a business firm. It sees a great opportunity for expansion; it has a good product for which the market is there. But it is already over-trading somewhat. Surely a prudent board would decide that, however tempting the immediate opportunity, it must consolidate its position by producing within its existing limits for two or three years, so as to reinforce its financial position, and then, when that has been done, branch out.

Britannicus: But surely our prime task now is to increase production. How shall we do it, if we do not have the necessary capital expenditure?

Œconomicus: First, I must draw a distinction between aggregate production and productivity, or output per man. Capital expenditure may be directed to increasing production, by increasing the stands for men (and women) in factories, or by increasing output per man. Economists use the expressions for these two things of 'widening' and 'deepening'. I believe that, in recent years, the major part of capital expenditure has gone to 'widening'; I think that we should concentrate now, as regards the capital expenditure we can afford, on 'deepening'.

Britannicus: I suggest that we shall require both, if we are to achieve all our tasks.

Œconomicus: I am very doubtful if a further

'widening' will help us at all in the discharge of our tasks during the next two or three years. I concentrate upon these years because they are all important. We must not let our re-armament commitments slip out of the picture. When we have passed the bulge of re-equipment, many things may become easier.

Widening

Britannicus: But will not 'widening' be needed for these immediate tasks?

Œconomicus: I doubt if it will help us to achieve them. Let me explain by starting with the proposition, which seems popular, that we should increase the volume of our exports. We shall certainly gain nothing by doing this, if in order to do so we have to offer them for sale at lower prices in terms of imports. This is precisely what we have been doing in the last two years, and, despite a large increase in the volume of exports, our total exports will not buy us more imports than before. We have got to make quite certain that any further increase in the volume of exports does not, by a renewed worsening in the terms of trade, prove, like the last increase, of null effect.

But, even waiving this point, that is to say, supposing no worsening in the terms of trade, it is quite doubtful whether an additional quantity of exports will help. In the first place, our marginal exports have a large import content. Secondly, we have to provide the capital equipment—the 'widening' which you recommend—in order to produce the extra goods. Since we are fully extended at home, this marginal equipment must come from abroad. What with the materials and with the equipment, I doubt if we should enjoy any net gain on balance of trade account by increasing the volume of exports, if this involves a widening of our productive capacity. I am speaking of the next two or three years only, remember. If we have to widen our capital capacity in order to achieve this bigger volume of exports, then I say we shall be merely chasing our own tail. There will be no net gain. We shall not be any forrader in our other tasks. We shall merely be importing a lot more in order to export a lot more.

Britannicus: Then we shall have to abandon our tasks?

Œconomicus: Not at all; the trouble is that you have a wrong idea of the 'tasks'. If we reduce our capital outlay, we reduce our 'tasks', render further 'widening' unnecessary, and thus get out of a vicious circle.

Britannicus: But how will the balance of trade come straight?

Œconomicus: Reducing capital outlay will reduce our import requirements on the one side. I should also hope to improve our receipts from exports without expanding their volume, by getting better prices for many of the things we are now exporting. That this could be done is not seriously challenged.

Keynes's argument in reverse

Britannicus: It seems to me that with your reduced capital outlay and your unwillingness to increase the quantity of exports, you will land us in unemployment.

Œconomicus: No; there is enough factory equipment to employ the existing labour force. I would not seek to increase the labour force now in our factories. The arms output should be accomplished by a switch-over of employment, not by an increase of those in manufacturing industries. In the last three years the number so employed has increased by 650 thousand, or about eight per cent; this particular form of occupation has absorbed the whole increase of employed man- and woman-power. We should halt, or greatly reduce, this rate of increase.

Britannicus: This is a great paradox.

Œconomicus: The trouble is that there is some element of paradox in economics. Twenty years ago Keynes was thought highly paradoxical, even quite mad, when at a time of apparent national bankruptcy —the great slump—when firms were suffering heavy losses and goods were unsaleable, he recommended increased capital works and increased spending. Yet after a few years of thought about his views, they lost their paradoxical character and came to be generally accepted as correct. We are now in exactly the opposite position, with everything in short supply and the demands from our system greater than can be met. And here I come along recommending a curtailment in the rate at which we expand our factory capacity. I can see why it strikes you as paradoxical.

Yet it is simply Keynes's argument in reverse. If he was right then, I am right now. By seeking to go ahead too quickly and devoting too much of our resources to capital expansion, we shall fail to achieve the tasks that lie before us in the next two or three years.

Britannicus: This is difficult doctrine.

The need to 'deepen' capital

Œconomicus: It is sometimes helpful to take one's mind off the immediate problem and look at long period trends. The United States is far ahead of us now and has reached a position which we should hope to attain in the course of time. In that great centre of manufacture, only 26 per cent of the employed population are engaged in manufacture, whereas here 39 per cent are so engaged.

Britannicus: That is because the United States is a great agricultural country.

Œconomicus: I knew you would say that; I have my figures ready. In the United States the population employed in manufacture and agriculture together is only 38 per cent of the total, whereas in our case it is 44 per cent. The proportion of the employed population in the United States that is engaged in manufacture and agriculture together is less than the proportion here engaged on manufacture alone. Of course they have achieved that because their productivity per man in manufacture is so much greater than ours; we cannot get into their position straight away; but it may give us some guidance as regards the trend. I believe that our right trend is to 'deepen' capital; and, by this and other methods not less important, to make productivity per man in manufacture progressively greater, and that, as we do this, we should expect to see the proportion of our population employed in manufacture gradually, albeit no doubt slowly, decline. I should certainly not suppose we ought to have an increase in the proportion employed in manufacture. One might argue that there must be a temporary increase for the arms programme, but I should judge that it would be wiser, in view of our tight position on materials and machinery, to solve that problem by a switch-over within manufacture rather than by an increase in numbers there.

Incidentally, it is a sobering reflection that in the United States, which displays such a mighty power of manufacture, undertaking an arms programme vastly greater than ours, supplying its large population with a high standard of living, and exporting goods all over the world, the total number engaged in manufacture is in absolute numbers only twice that so engaged here.

As we move towards that happy position, we should expect a smaller proportion to be engaged in manufacture and a larger proportion in sundry services.

Some years ago a little book was published entitled *Are These Hardships Necessary?* Some of its propositions have been fairly widely accepted, others not. I am not sure that the most pregnant sentence was not one that has escaped attention: 'There is a tendency to say whenever the manpower shortage is discussed "take it away from distribution". *This notion should be accepted with caution.*'

Hardships all round

Britannicus: If you hold that the arms programme should be encompassed mainly by a switch within manufacture, you are probably in favour of the restriction on consumer durables?

Œconomicus: Yes, very much so. Going back to what I said about the point that, if you try to solve the problem by taxing the consumer more heavily, you will not release very valuable resources—cinema space, etc.—I should propose to confine the attack upon the consumer to the restriction or taxation of selected items which really do release good resources. Of the two ways of reducing consumption of durables, namely that of withdrawing hire purchase facilities and that of restricting supplies, I notice that it has been the former that has been the main target of attack; but it is the former that is the more valuable. The latter may merely increase inflationary pressure in other fields, while the former reduces the total volume of purchasing power and is truly, therefore, disinflationary. I recognise that it involves hardship, but there will be hardships all round. In the case of this hardship, at least we know that it is really contributing something valuable to the nation. And

after all, if consumers are willing to save up—and it is more saving that we want above all—consumers can get their durables eventually despite the hire purchase restrictions. Similarly the encouragement of home ownership would be especially valuable.

We need a change

Britannicus: I thought you had plumped in favour of restriction of capital expenditure rather than increase of saving.

Œconomicus: You have misunderstood me completely. I want every possible encouragement to private saving; I simply do not want capital expenditure to outrun private saving too much; but I want the private saving to be as big as possible, so that the capital expenditure that is soundly based thereon can itself be as big as possible.

The issue is this. I think it would be unwise at this particular juncture to try to supplement private saving by a large amount of compulsory collective saving, secured by higher taxes. I want to solve our problem in the other way, namely by seeking to make prices come down at the earliest possible date and, when the bulge of re-armament is over, by making taxes come down too, to revivify the tendency to private saving. Give up for the moment the idea of compulsory collective saving on a big scale; cut capital expenditure in line with private saving so as to get rid of inflation—which is such an enemy of private saving—and thereby restore the balance of trade; and then in due course and in the long run hope to rebuild private saving and to restore the pace of capital expenditure in line with that. But even in this long run I should hope that the capital expenditure would be mainly for 'deepening' rather than for 'widening'.

This is a broad policy. It is based on simple principle. It involves to some extent a reversal of existing modes of thought. I think that the methods which we have been using in recent years have now reached a stalemate, and that we need a change in our thinking. If this change occurs, I am confident that we can reach a position of very great strength in a comparatively short time.

Britannicus: Do stop talking a moment. We can listen to Mr. Butler's Budget statement coming through on the wireless, which is rather more important. (*A pause.*)

Well, how do you like it?

Œconomicus: It sounds good. I am immensely relieved that the Chancellor has not yielded to those who wished him to grind down the consumers.

Britannicus: I have got my reduction of food subsidies.

Œconomicus: No, not in the form you wanted. You wished for subsidies 'to mop up purchasing power.' The Chancellor has used this measure for a different purpose, namely to enable him to make tax concessions that will increase the incentives to hard work. So far as I can make out, just listening, he has made a fair distribution of reliefs and burdens. The better off are mulched by the higher cost of motoring. Only the unmarrieds will be a little worse off. Perhaps they can afford to contribute something at this juncture.

Britannicus: But what about the drive against inflation?

Œconomicus: That is symbolised by the 4 per cent Bank Rate. This is only the most visible sign of a general policy to be pursued along various lines for restricting capital expenditure. Even if the Chancellor has not accepted all my 'paradoxes', his action seems in harmony with my broad conclusion. Frankly, I feel quite pleased. All depends on how he follows it up.

The 'desire for freedom' often ends in disillusionment

REFUGEES FROM THE EAST

CHARLES T. REYNER

PARTLY because of its geographic position and partly because of a default by the rest of the free world, the Federal Republic of Germany has been forced into a rôle for which it is both materially and spiritually unfitted: that of receptionist and host for the majority of refugees who come West seeking asylum from Communist persecution. The compound result of this miscasting throws a further burden on an economy already overloaded, places a moral responsibility on a people unprepared by tradition or present temperament to discharge it, and contradicts the 'freedom' propaganda broadcast to the East by the Voice of America, BBC and Radio Free Europe.

The fact that the border facing Western Germany apparently is less closely guarded from the other side than the frontiers facing Austria, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey, the potential security afforded by the British and American armies of Occupation, and the comparatively higher standard of living there, combine to make Germany the principal destination of the fugitives who come out of Russia and the Satellites. A monthly average of more than 1,000 former citizens of the Eastern European countries, as well as an estimated 2,000 people of German origin, have been crossing over into the Western sectors of Berlin and the Western zones of Germany during the last year, and except for periods of severe winter weather, the traffic shows no signs of diminishing.

The new arrivals add to a burden which already staggers the Bonn Government. When the International Refugee Organisation, a specialised agency of UNO, closed its operations at the end of January after having resettled nearly 1,050,000 people to 113 countries in four and a half years, it left behind about 150,000 people of non-German origin, for whom it had been unable to find new homes. In addition, the native population of 40,000,000 has been swollen by another 7,500,000 people of German ethnic origin, who have either been expelled from, or have fled from, the Eastern European countries, from the former German territories east of the Oder-Neisse frontier with Poland, and from the Soviet Zone of Germany. More than eighteen per cent of the country's present total population arrived as penniless refugees less than ten years ago.

About 400,000 of the refugees now in Germany, including some 80,000 of the IRO legacy, are totally dependent on public funds for food, shelter, clothing and medical care. They live in camps ranging in size from a few score to more than 4,000 people, or by government order have moved in to share the private homes of villagers and farmers. The newcomers are unwelcome because they add to the tax burden, increase the housing shortage, and compete for scarce jobs. Germany, unlike France, pre-Communist Czechoslovakia and the Scandinavian countries, has no pre-war tradition of hospitality for fugitives from persecution, and today its people and their government feel sorry for themselves and show their resentment in discrimination against the new *Auslaenders*, towards whom they feel no responsibility or compassion.

The Result of Warnings

Since 1949 the governing General Council of the IRO and its Director-General have issued several warnings that it would not be able to find satisfactory solutions for all of the more than 1,500,000 refugees who had already asked for help, and for the tens of thousands more who were then pouring out of the East.

Although these warnings were heeded to the extent that the IRO was given an additional nineteen months of life, from the end of June 1950, to the end of January 1952—time during which it transported to new homes abroad nearly a quarter of a

million people—the only other concrete action aimed directly at the problem was the establishment in January 1951 of the office of the High Commissioner. This office was charged with the 'international protection' of 'groups and categories' of refugees who are out of their home countries, or who later escape to avoid persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality or political opinion. It is not concerned with ethnic German refugees in Germany but is with those in Austria. Mr. G. J. van Heuven Goedhart of Holland was named Commissioner, and in two years has been voted a total of $1,000,000 with which to establish his Geneva headquarters and set up field offices in the eleven countries around the world where he believes he most needs representation.

Money for the Commissioner

Although Germany, with 150,000, is the focal point of the Iron Curtain refugee problem, Mr. van Heuven Goedhart is concerned with an additional 265,000 scattered through Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East and Far East. France is sheltering 193,000, and groups totalling more than 15,000 are in Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. Austria and Italy have 24,000 each, Greece has 4,000 and Lebanon, Syria and Turkey, about 525.

When he appeared before the Third Committee of the UNO General Assembly in Paris in January, the High Commissioner proposed to solicit voluntary contributions of $3,000,000 and disburse the money through welfare and relief agencies working in his field, for the relief of the most acute distress among refugees and to help them establish themselves in their present countries of residence. When the General Assembly gave its approval by a vote of thirty-nine to five, the United States abstained. Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, the U.S. Delegate, explained that she had not voted because she felt that her Government would not contribute to the fund. Of the $398,656,826 paid into the IRO's four-and-a-half-year programme by its eighteen member nations, more than half came from the United States and that Government has made it increasingly clear in recent months that it did not feel it could continue relief appropriations. More than ninety per cent of IRO's money came from five countries: the U.S. 60 per cent; U.K. 19 per cent; France, 5.5 per cent; Canada 4.5 per cent, and Australia 2.3 per cent.

'Movement of Migrants'

Most Western governments, and particularly the United States, are looking to the recently formed 'Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe' (PICME) to keep the Iron Curtain refugee problem from growing any larger. Delegates from sixteen nations organised PICME at a December conference in Brussels and charted as its first year's experimental programme the movement of about 115,000 of Europe's surplus population to Australia, Canada, Latin America, New Zealand and the United States. PICME began its work in February, employing former IRO staff members and using the IRO fleet of chartered ships. Its 1952 budget is nearly $34,000,000.

The foundation for PICME was laid last year when the U.S. Congress authorised the use of $10,000,000 of ECA funds to assist in the transport of surplus populations from Europe to underpopulated areas. The authorisation was accompanied by a proposal that further funds be secured from countries wishing to promote emigration, countries wishing to acquire new population through immigration, governments not directly interested in either emigration or immigration, but concerned about the general political and economic dangers of an overpopulated Europe, and, whenever possible, from the migrants themselves. The U.S. authorisation also specified that the fund be administered by an inter-governmental body which did not include in its membership any country from the other side of the Iron Curtain. It was this stipulation which brought about the collapse of a migration conference convened by the International Labour Office in Naples last October. The ILO membership includes Russian Satellites.

Although PICME may accept funds especially earmarked for the movement of Iron Curtain refugees, and is expected to

receive from two to six million dollars from the liquidated IRO for that purpose, it is doubtful whether an important percentage of the non-German refugees now remaining in Europe will benefit. Several factors give the native candidate an advantage over the refugee. One is the change in emphasis since the IRO began its work in 1947. At that time the approach was partly economic and partly humanitarian; although the IRO lost no opportunity to point out to receiving countries the gains they would make in acquiring new manpower moved to their shores free of charge, the entire programme was carried on with a strong humanitarian appeal. The majority of the refugees in the camps were Displaced Persons who had been compelled to come to Germany to concentration camps or for forced labour during the Second World War, and did not want to return East after hostilities because the Communists had taken over their homelands since they left.

Most of the 150,000 of these people still in Germany have been 'picked over' by Australia, Britain, Canada, the U.S. and other countries, and have been unable to qualify anywhere. There is little possibility that they will find a migration opportunity now, after more than four years of failure. Also, it would not be surprising if the migrant selection missions, which come to Europe under PICME auspices, hew closer to the economic than the humanitarian line, since they will have to pay at least a portion of the cost of moving the new citizen and will be on the watch for candidates who will be able to make important contributions to the labour force of the country. Another factor which may militate against the refugee is the fact that he is without funds or material resources; since the programme includes a contribution from the emigrant whenever possible, the candidate able to help pay his own way will have an added attraction. In one respect the recent arrivals will have a marked advantage. Most of those who have crossed the frontiers in the last few months are comparatively young, are in good health (few of the old or the sick attempt the hardships of escape), and have no dependents with them. They are ideal candidates for immigration to a country wishing to build up its labour force without incurring additional social responsibilities.

Change of Plan

Mr. van Heuven Goedhart's plan to assist refugees in becoming assimilated in the countries that have given them asylum reflects a shift in the UNO approach to the problem of the homeless political refugee. The first approach, adopted immediately after the end of the war by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), was one of straight relief. By the time IRO inherited the question in July 1947, it was evident that those who had not been repatriated to their homes immediately after hostilities probably would not go back as long as the Communists were in power, and resettlement abroad was considered the best solution. Today, because most of the remaining refugees cannot qualify for immigration, and because the governments are unwilling to continue spending money on the scale required by IRO's resettlement programmes, there is increasing emphasis on assimilation of refugees in the countries in which they first seek asylum—those bordering on the Iron Curtain.

Assimilation

Leaders among the refugees themselves oppose complete assimilation, especially in cultural matters, because they feel it would destroy the faith of their people in the aims of UNO and they would lose hope of eventually returning to their liberated homelands. They are growing increasingly concerned about the education of their young people. They know that the educational systems within their home countries have been either destroyed or perverted beyond usefulness by the Communist administrations, and unless those who have escaped have opportunity to continue their learning outside the Iron Curtain, liberation and freedom will find them dangerously short of leadership. The youth will be uneducated; the pre-Communist intellectuals who remained in the country will have been destroyed and those who escaped will have grown old and will be badly scattered and out of touch. The Central Committee which represents all non-German refugees in Germany urge

Government support for the establishment of 'national' schools for each of the language groups. This proposal is rejected by the German Government and the Allied Occupation authorities as being both impractical and politically dangerous. The Germans are particularly anxious to prevent the formation of strong political factions among the foreign refugees.

Although West Germany's economic condition now is better than that of the other countries of refugee first asylum—Austria, Greece, Italy, Turkey and Yugoslavia—the psychological atmosphere of that country will make local assimilation more than normally difficult. The Government has passed its own law establishing the status of homeless foreigners within its boundaries, and undoubtedly soon will sign and ratify the UNO Convention on the Status of Refugees adopted in Geneva last July, but the German people and the lower levels of officialdom do not reflect the charitable attitude of their leaders in Bonn.

German Discrimination

Discrimination against Iron Curtain refugees is practised in many ways by government employees at the village, city and county level, and by individuals. It finds its way into the allocation of housing, selection for employment, the issue of identity documents, administration of public assistance and compensation for war damages. Although all *Laender* have passed legislation governing the compensation of victims of Nazi persecution, most refugee Displaced Persons have been denied this compensation because officials insist they were sent to German concentration camps during the war for 'national reasons', rather than for 'political, religious or racial reasons'. One official in Schleswig-Holstein rejected the claim of a Polish petitioner, with the statement that he had not been persecuted, because a concentration camp should be regarded as a 'lawful' institution. South Germany has seen many instances in which discrimination took the form of special marks on the identity cards. In one series of cases, the cards had been stamped with the German equivalent of 'illegal border crosser', without regard to the fact that most of the refugees had been forcibly brought to the country by the Nazi Government, and the remainder had come as political persecutees. When Occupation and IRO officials objected and demanded the practice be stopped and all cards corrected, the Germans complied by drawing a single line through the objectionable stamp imprint. In another area authorities singled the refugee out for special unfavourable attention by stamping his identity card with a statement to the effect that the information on the card as to the holder's true name, nationality and place of birth could not be verified and must be accepted on faith.

The fact that the German Government has delegated the administration of refugee matters to a staff that is made up almost entirely of *Sudetendeutsche* and *Volksdeutsche* adds another element of friction and tension, since virtually all Iron Curtain refugees were nationals of Eastern countries from which these ethnic German administrators have been expelled. The feeling is particularly bitter between Czech refugees and the *Sudetendeutsche* who were expelled from the western and northern border regions of Czechoslovakia.

Unpleasant Reception

Refugees who have listened regularly to the West's anti-Communist propaganda broadcasts before they left their home countries—and many say these broadcasts were a strong influence in their decision to escape—come up against a harsh and unpleasant reception when they reach Germany. They find they have gained freedom from the terror and secret police of the Communist State, but not freedom from want, freedom to work or freedom of movement. They are not confined to the refugee camps but there is no other place they can find food or shelter. They are crowded into these bleak camps with nothing to do and no future before them.

Until the protests of IRO and violent press attacks forced a change of procedure by the American Occupation authorities of southern Germany, some of the newly-arrived refugees were being sentenced to prison terms for having taken advantage of the political asylum which they thought was guaranteed them by the

West. American Occupation law defines entry into Germany without valid identification documents and a visa as a crime, and U.S. Occupation courts—institutions established by the United States Government and staffed by judges who are United States citizens—were trying, convicting and sentencing refugees to prison terms ranging from two weeks to thirty days, despite the fact that it was impossible for them to have entered Germany in any way except 'illegally'. Non-German refugees in northern Germany, in the area of British control, are subject to local courts instead of the Occupation authorities and here were receiving similar treatment until U.K. officers intervened.

Propaganda Broadcasts

Although officials of the *Voice of America* and of the privately-financed *Radio Free Europe* knew that the majority of refugees say propaganda broadcasts influenced their decision to escape, they adopt a 'Who, me?' attitude if questioned about their responsibility for encouraging flights that end in such disillusionment and disappointment. One VOA official in New York explained that ' . . . but we have been very careful since we found out what a rough deal they got.' A Munich officer of RFE admits that in broadcasts to Czechoslovakia 'we leave the impression that it is not too bad.' A press hand-out of the *Crusade for Freedom*, the American fund-raising organisation supporting RFE, declares that one of the purposes of the broadcasts is *to foster among the prisoner peoples the desire for freedom and to kindle an active spirit of liberation.*

Meanwhile, when severe weather does not make travel through the mountains and forests impossible, 'the desire for freedom' brings additional hundreds over the frontiers on foot, on horses, in stolen aeroplanes and gliders, in the coal bins of railway locomotives and in borrowed trains to the refugee camps each month. A few will find immigration opportunities abroad. Occupation authorities in Germany believe that a considerable number have become so discouraged that they have returned to the Communist sphere as the lesser evil of two fates. The remainder wait in the camps without hope.

There is no way of knowing how much damage this refugee situation is doing to the West's reputation among the people behind the Iron Curtain, but the Russians are giving it wide publicity, with stories and occasional pictures and without their usual amount of distortion. The story they tell is clear: 'If you desert and join the Western Imperialistic Capitalists, this is what you can expect!'

PICME. IRO. UNHICOM

The 'Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe' was formed without affiliation with the United Nations Organisation, although all but three of its members are also members of UNO. Represented on the Committee are Australia, Austria (non-UNO), Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, France, West Germany (non-UNO), Greece, Holland, Italy (non-UNO), Luxembourg, Switzerland, Turkey and U.S.

The International Refugee Organisation was a specialised agency of UNO and was governed by its own General Council, which in turn was responsible to UNO through the Economic and Social Council. Member governments of IRO were: Australia, Belgium, Canada, China (Nationalist), Denmark, the Dominican Republic, France, Guatemala, Holland, Iceland, Italy (non-UNO), Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States and Venezuela.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is responsible directly to the United Nations Organisation. He receives instructions from the General Assembly and from the Economic and Social Council, but not from member governments.

The final trial of strength will be between the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India

THE INDIAN SCENE

A. S. RAMAN

INDEPENDENT India's first General Election, spread over a period of more than three months, which is in progress at the time of writing, is a unique experiment in democracy. The world's largest electorate has been participating in it, and, judged from the unseating of several prominent leaders which they deserved, with a political acumen that is astounding. The Indian masses have shown ample evidence of the fact that they fully grasp the significance of an election. The methods so dear to the Communist heart, therefore, are not likely to appeal to them at all. There are, no doubt, difficulties if elections under adult franchise are to be held in a country like India where more than half of the population have never had electoral experience worth the name, and where ninety per cent of them are illiterate. Other factors adding to the difficulties are long distances, a difficult terrain, utter confusion in the midst of a maze of complicated rules and procedures and a multiplicity of parties and candidates, and the widespread prejudice against public servants. But all the difficulties have vanished during the first Indian General Election which was marked by popular enthusiasm and official efficiency beyond expectation; particularly as efficiency, since Independence, has been the exception rather than the rule.

The Parties

Under the Constitution, India comprises three kinds of federating units: (1) Nine Part A States formerly known as Governors' Provinces — Assam, Bihar, Bombay, Madhya Pradesh (Central Provinces), Madras, Orissa, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh (United Provinces) and West Bengal. (2) Seven Part B States which constitute the Princely India in a unified and integrated form—Hyderabad, Madhya Bharat, Mysore, Patiala and East Punjab States Union, Rajasthan, Saurashtra and Travancore-Cochin and (3) seven Part C States which at the moment are centrally administered — Ajmer, Bhopal, Bilaspur, Coorg, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Vindhya Pradesh. Besides, there are three electoral colleges—Kutch, Manipur and Tripura. Elections to State Assemblies, and to the lower house of Parliament, known as the House of People, are almost over. We shall not have all the results of the General Election before us for some time. But the writing on the wall is clear. What does it say? That the final trial of strength will be between the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India. A recent All-India analysis revealed that a Communist candidate in Madras polled the largest number of votes, even larger than Nehru. Other All-India parties are: The *Kisan* (Peasants') *Mazdoor* (Workers') *Praja* (Peoples') Party which hopes to succeed where the Congress failed—in combining Gandhian eccentricities with practical politics—its chief, Acharya J. B. Kripalani, is a former President of the Congress—the Indian Socialist Party with its vague and muddled programme which at best can only be of academic interest, the *Bharatiya* (Indian) *Jana* (People's) *Sangh* (Association), which dreams of the ultimate nullification of partition and reunification of India, a dangerous dream, and the Scheduled Castes Federation which is best ignored. The last-mentioned party has so far won two parliamentary seats in a House of 496. Here I must refer to Independents who derive their power—they are most powerful in Madras and Rajasthan—from the Electorate's distrust of all parties. In no other democracy, as in India, has the

electorate ever shown so much enthusiasm for the personality rather than the party of a candidate. But, on the whole, the common man in India is party-minded. Having seen enough of the Congress, he is today curious about the Communists. The Soviet films drew the heartiest applause from the audience in Delhi cinemas during the recent International Film Festival in which twenty-three countries participated.

Of course, I do not mean to suggest that the Communists have enough strength to form Ministries, except perhaps in Travancore-Cochin which is already being described as the Yenan of India. But their morale is very high owing to their success at the polls. It remains to be seen, however, whether they will be able to consolidate their position, because they are seriously handicapped by lack of leadership. In the meantime, they continue to rouse enthusiasm among masses who blame the Congress for all their misery, as they had, till the other day, blamed the British.

The Verdict on Congress

The verdict of the inarticulate Indian masses on the Congress, say the critics of the Congress, is more justified than that on the British. What are, they ask, the achievements of the Congress leadership in the first four years of freedom? The only concrete achievement seems to be a Constitution weighing about 2 lb! It is generally believed that since the Kuomintang is now ineffectual, the Congress is the world's most corrupt party today, and it is unfortunate that Nehru, a man of unimpeachable personal integrity, should be presiding over it. The Congress, like its counterpart in Art, the Bengal School, suffers from a complacency that is suicidal. It is the refuge of all sorts of reactionaries, renegades and racketeers working at cross-purposes.

Sri Prakasa, Minister for Natural Resources and Scientific Research, summing up succintly the criticism against the Congress, observes thus:

> 'I must confess that I got the very unhappy impression that the Congress as the Party in power had become totally discredited; that its leaders had lost their hold on the hearts of the people; that the ideologies of the Congress were all wrong or out of date; that our policies and principles have been tested and found wanting; in fact, that we have done nothing; we have proved false to our pledges; and that it was time we were buried deep in the earth "unwept, unhonoured and unsung".'

And what is his answer to these charges? Very simple: that one 'would be thankful that things are not worse than they are'! It is time that a party which goes to the electorate with such a manifesto realised where it stood. Not that the Congress will not be able to form Ministries, however unstable, in most of the States and at the Centre. On 20 February 1952, it formed the first new Ministry in Orissa, where its position is particularly precarious. But only miracles can save it from losing the next Election.

The Charges against Congress

It is only natural that Communism should flourish in a country where the masses are dying rather than living. Their electoral victories have demonstrated that the strength of the Communists had been stupidly underrated by the Congress. Apart from acute economic distress, which has only become worse under its regime, the Congress is guilty of several acts of omission and commission which have contributed to the defeat of its candidates in Madras and other South Indian States.

Firstly, the Congress has failed to redeem its pledge to reorganise States on a linguistic basis, a pledge in which the Telugu-speaking districts of the Madras State, where the Congress candidates have fared worst, are particularly interested.

Secondly, the Congress in its anxiety to make Hindi the national language has shown little regard for the susceptibilities of the South Indians, who believe that their languages are older and richer.

Thirdly, the Congress has done nothing to allay the fear of the South Indians that it is controlled by northerners. For instance, the Central Government, under the leadership of the Congress, has done practically nothing to raise the standard of living in South India, which, as it is, is appalling. Here, a beggar asks for a pie, 1-192nd of a rupee, which he examines very carefully

before accepting—in Delhi, he asks for an anna, 1-16th of a rupee. A letter appeared in a recent issue of *The Statesman*. Its author, a South Indian, lodging a spirited protest against the neglect of South India's interests by the Central Government, observes that 'whatever may be said against the British regime in India it is an indisputable fact that they treated all provinces alike.'

Fourthly, the Congress has betrayed a colossal ignorance of the real character of the politics in South India, where serious tensions exist between Telugus and Tamils, between Brahmins and Non-Brahmins.

Fifthly, the Congress has given its blessings to a Ministry in Madras which, judged from its almost total rejection by the electorate, has been most unpopular—it still exists though in an innocuous caretaker form. The unpopularity of the Ministry is best illustrated by the poignancy of the appeal which a sixty-year-old farmer from one of the Andhra districts, where the Communists contested 64 seats and won 41, preferred the other day to the District Magistrate. He said: 'We are aware that several Communists are guilty of the most horrible crimes and we are at one with the Government in condemning such atrocities and we wholeheartedly approve of all measures taken by the Government to stop this menace. But I would ask again whether it is proper for a Government established by the people or its servants in their drive against Communist terrorists to lose their reason, run amok and beat up all and sundry indiscriminately in the manner they have done or are doing? Do the Government believe that such acts as these are an effective check to Communist activities, that they enhance the prestige of the Government or induce any respect for the Government in the mind of the people?'

Lastly, the Congress has thrown itself at the tender mercies of a bureaucracy, incompetent, unimaginative and arrogant. Let me give an example. Recently a unique exhibition was attempted in Delhi. It was an exhibition covering the last fifty years of Indian Art based entirely on local collections. While many collectors co-operated with the organisers most enthusiastically, the Government of India 'regretted their inability to loan their collection', which is believed to be the richest and rarest and to which, incidentally, the public has never had access. Nobody knows where this collection is and what condition it is in. There are many such instances to show what a wooden bureaucracy rules India today.

* * *

Thus, with the Congress thoroughly demoralised and with Nehru not knowing how to rid himself of it, with the Communists jubilant at the prospect of capitalising on the hunger, disease, ignorance and superstition that India is, with others threatening to be taken seriously, but actually not in a position to do anything with their electoral victories or defeats and with a Civil Service that seldom acts, the Indian scene is very gloomy indeed. The only relieving feature, however, is Nehru's own idealism; but it is so impotent. It is to be hoped that he will soon examine the tools he has been using.

ELECTORAL SYMBOLS

Four of the fourteen symbols approved by the Election Commission for 'All India' parties. From left to right, Congress; Communist Party; Socialist Party; Kisan Mazdoor Praja

The patient is willing to be patient

GERMANY AT THE HALF-WAY STAGE

GEOFFREY SKELTON

LIKE a patient recovering from a severe illness, Germany has now reached that dangerous half-way stage at which the pure fascination of recovery fades, and the exhausted mind realises with horror the distance there is still to go. This is the stage at which the kindly-meant encouragement and congratulations of nurses and relatives begin to sound hollow both to the people who utter them and to the patient. The patient's re-won ability, in the earliest days, to move her toes, brought rapturous applause, not because the ability to move toes was in itself so very important, but because it gave hope of an ability eventually to move other and larger limbs.

Culturally Germany began to move her toes quite soon after the war. Those first encouraging movements have with time lost the power to provoke such enthusiastic applause. The toes are still wiggling, but it is a performance of which one is becoming a little tired. One had hoped by now for something more.

The Cinema

Where in the cinema, for instance, are the successors of those early post-war films *Ehe im Schatten* and *Liebe 47*, which were never as big as the great German films of the late twenties, yet, for their time and circumstances, hopeful buds? Since those first attempts the German cinema has fallen into a dreary commercialism, dissipating its energies in light social comedies (a *genre* in which it could never hope to shine) and in big coloured nothings vulgarising old operettas (*Schwarzwaldmädel*, *Czardasfürstin*) or sentimentalising old glories (*Grün ist die Heide*). Harold Braun, a director of intelligence, whose *Nachtwache* in 1949 gave as a shining exception a moving commentary on the consolations of religion in a sceptical modern world, lost himself two years later in an ambitious effort to illuminate the problem of good and evil through a parallel treatment of refugee camps and the threatening crash of a comet into the earth (*Der fallende Stern*). Certainly his failure was worth any number of the routine comedies of his colleagues, and one awaits his new film concerning the German pacifist Berta von Suttner with hope (*Herz der Welt*). He is about the only film director of whom it seems possible at this stage to expect much. Wolfgang Liebeneiner, who made *Liebe 47*, has gone over to the comedies (true, his are better than most), and Helmut Käutner has made after his repulsive *Epilog*, which stirred critical interest last year, only a very pale Alpine thriller (*Weisse Schatten*). Erich Pommer has recently brought out his first German post-war film (*Nachts auf den Strassen*), but it is too early to predict whether he will be able to recapture his old style.

The film, owing to its extreme dependence on the financier (Germany is not alone in having had to sign away her filmic soul to this particular Mephistopheles) is, of course, a special case. Theatre and opera, both heavily and on the whole willingly subsidised by municipalities, offer perhaps a better chance to pinpoint the cultural state of the country.

The Theatre

After years of making do in halls and cinemas, many towns have now rebuilt their theatres and opera houses. In Berlin the new *Schillertheater* has been opened; in Munich the lovely old baroque *Residenztheater* has been replaced by a provocative modern building which has nothing in common with the old theatre beyond its site and its name. New Theatres have been opened in Essen, Dortmund, Aachen and Frankfurt. It is a pleasant fact that the town authorities, even in these days of heavily-increased costs, have not abandoned their traditional habit of regarding

the theatre as a civic amenity. The private theatre plays a lesser rôle, concentrating, however, more on the box-office success than on the unsaleable experiment. There are, as there always were, small bands of experimenters operating in attic theatres here and there, but the experiments have not yet brought forth a new Hauptmann or a new Brecht. One looks in vain there, as in the municipal theatres, for the new dramatists and the new composers. There have been some, of course, but it is not easy to keep track of them, so ephemeral are their appearances. Nothing has so far come from a young composer or dramatist which has been able to hold the stage for longer than a barely respectable number of performances.

The main diet is provided by the classics (in the theatre Goethe, Schiller, Shakespeare, Molière, Shaw; in the opera Mozart, Wagner, Verdi and Puccini). Next to them in the theatre come the contemporary foreigners—Christopher Fry (most popular of all), T. S. Eliot (perhaps more respected than loved), Sartre, Anouilh (both treated with considerable reserve), Tennessee Williams and Thornton Wilder. The German who has succeeded Gerhard Hauptmann as the leading dramatist is Karl Zuckmayer, best known outside Germany for his *Der Hauptmann von Köpenick*. His post-war piece *Des Teufels General*, dealing with a Luftwaffe officer (supposedly the ace flyer Udet), who thought he could serve the Nazis and keep his principles, was a tremendous success wherever it was played (perhaps because it placed the blame for his failure so squarely on the shoulders of the other man?) The following *Gesang im Feuerofen*, which dealt with the conflict between German soldiers and resistance members in France, was praised largely but enjoyed somewhat less. Both pieces, written perhaps too close to the event to go deeper than intelligent commentary, are unlikely to endure as works of art. Zuckmayer is technically a traditionalist, and for that reason offers little to the apprentice dramatist in the way of new ideas.

The only original German dramatist now practising is Bert Brecht, of *Dreigroschenoper* fame. Unfortunately the growing rift between Eastern and Western Germany and Brecht's own inability to help committing himself to the Communist side (he likes to proclaim his political independence, but is fighting against overwhelming propagandistic odds) is seriously undermining his reputation as an artist. When last year his libretto for Paul Dessau's opera *Das Verhör des Lukullus* displeased the Eastern German Communists on account of its out-and-out pacifism, he made certain alterations admitting the legitimacy of war in defence of the Communist idea. He claimed that the alterations did not distort but clarified his original intention, and insisted on his right to alter his work to suit differing audiences. *Lukullus*, he said, when it is produced in Western Germany, will appear in its original form. But the argument is not convincing.

In the theatre the division between the two parts of Germany has now become so complete that one must regard them as two entirely foreign countries in which no contemporary dramatist favoured in the one is played in the other. The main point of resemblance between them is that neither has yet brought forth a convincing younger generation. In the musical world the division is not yet so extreme. The contemporary composers whose works are most often played in Western Germany have also some reputation on the other side of the border.

The Opera

On the operatic stage composers who enjoy a success wide enough to stand up to generalities are Paul Hindemith, Ernst Krenek, Carl Orff, Werner Egk and Heinrich Sutermeister. The first two, powers of the pre-Nazi period in Germany, are now at home in America, but young German composers who have so far made tentative appearances show more signs of learning from them than from the other three. That is understandable. The fascinating idiom of Carl Orff (born 1895) is very personal and rather limited. His boisterous tunes and rhythms suggest a Negro influence (*Carmina Burana*, introduced to London last year, is typical of his style). Of his operas the short *Die Kluge* is most popular in Germany.

Werner Egk, six years younger, has

something of the same idiomatic character. His two-hours-long ballet on the Faust theme, *Abraxas*, aroused curiosity in 1948 when the Bavarian Cultural Minister Hundhammer banned its performance in Munich on the grounds that it was immoral. It was later produced in Berlin, and since then has been a great success throughout the country—deservedly, for it is a work of compelling quality.

Heinrich Sutermeister (born 1910) is Swiss by birth. His operas *Raskolnikoff* (based on *Crime and Punishment*) and *Romeo and Juliet* have been fairly widely and successfully played. His work suffers somewhat from being cast, in text and action, in a traditional operatic form. Other composers who appear more in the concert hall than the opera-house are Boris Blacher, Wolfgang Fortner and Ernst Pepping. Hermann Reutter, who has a considerable bulk of work behind him, gained a brief nation-wide notoriety as the composer of an anthem praising brotherly love tentatively put forward a few months ago to replace the controversial *Deutschland über Alles*. The Germans were not impressed.

The Emigrés

Of the artists mentioned here, none of the writers and only the less significant of the composers practised during the Nazi years within Germany itself. The fact that art during this time was made dependent on a reactionary political outlook is very largely responsible for the present arid state of German culture. Defeat in war is by itself enough to break the flow of a country's artistic development (after all, it took Germany years after the First World War to recover her position), but the break is rendered even worse when the country loses faith in its own cultural standards. There was little enough indeed for the Germans to hold fast to when the first tidal wave of returning *emigrés* swept over them. Gerhard Hauptmann was dead, Richard Strauss in his declining years. The others who had stayed were not big enough to pit their artistic production against their politically-compromised past. They went under, and the former *emigrés* flooded through the land.

In their years abroad the *emigrés* had lost touch with their fellow-countrymen, had moved forward where the others had stood still. This gap is not yet closed. It is perhaps difficult for British people to appreciate the state of mind of a young German suddenly confronted for the first time with painters like Van Gogh and Franz Marc, writers like Kafka and James Joyce, composers like Hindemith and Stravinsky, sculptors like Henry Moore and Epstein, years after these had become absorbed into the artistic scene elsewhere. Knowing that these people are accepted as significant throughout the world, young German artists have tended to imitate before they have really absorbed. In this way, works such as Professor Ludwig's *Luftbrücke* memorial in Berlin, and Hans-Werner Henze's 'opera for actors', *Das Wundertheater*, wearing its late-twenties symbolism as if that were something new, have emerged.

The Need for a Tradition

The names of Ludwig and Henze are picked at random from those of the post-war generation to illustrate a tendency which is general. There is no point in cataloguing others, since it is quite impossible to predict which of them will eventually find their feet and produce work of permanent value. The important thing is not to expect too much of them too soon, and to cry woe because they are not better than they are. Artists, after all, in order to thrive need a tradition. They may approve it or reject it; the important thing is that it should be there and that the younger generation should be free to judge it on purely artistic grounds. Until the political clouds have lifted, it is difficult for young Germans to assess the worth of the artists who are most familiar to them, those who stayed in Germany during the Nazi years. Some of these are now emerging from their retirement, a sign that a new stage is being reached in Germany's cultural convalescence. They are heavily fought over, but in no very enlightened way. For instance, when Veit Harlan, director of the film *Jüd Suss*, last year brought out his first post-war film, *Unsterbliche Geliebte*, it was banned in advance in several towns, and in others

where it was shown there were demonstrations and disturbances. In the end it appeared in practically all cinemas and is now making the rounds of the suburban cinemas as unchallenged as any Wild Western from America. In fact, it is a harmless, sentimental piece and is much liked by the public. His second post-war film, *Hanna Amon*, equally sentimental, is having an only slightly less vociferous reception in the main cinemas. In the suburbs it will no doubt eventually be accepted with equal calm.

The actor Werner Krauss, appearing since the war at the Vienna *Burgtheater*, was taboo in Germany for several years owing to his appearance in the *Jüd Suss* film. When in 1950 he made an appearance in Germany as King Lear at the Recklinghausen Festival, he was rapturously received. A few months later, at his first appearance in Berlin as John Gabriel Borkmann, he was booed from the stage.

The seventy-year-old pianist Elly Ney was barred from appearing publicly in Bonn. She made extensive and highly successful tours in other German towns to raise funds for the re-erection of the bombed *Beethovenhalle* in Bonn, and recently handed over the sum of 30,000 marks for this purpose. Immediately afterwards, the Bonn city fathers reaffirmed their decision that she should not give concerts there.

Such quarrels and recriminations, whether justified or not, profoundly affect apprentice artists, dependent as they are on the interest of their elders to help them in their first struggles. The elders with whom they are familiar are too busy trying to rehabilitate themselves to be of more than very doubtful help. The *emigrés* who have returned are not yet sufficiently established in Germany to have made fruitful contact with the new talent.

The importance of a tradition to ensure continuity is illustrated very clearly by the Bayreuth Festival, which was held last summer for the first time since the war. Richard Wagner's two grandsons, Wolfgang and Wieland, both in their thirties, decided to scrap in their new productions of the music dramas much of the heavy realism which the composer categorically demanded and which, under the regime of Wagner's widow, son and daughter-in-law, was piously retained. The grandsons were more concerned to keep the operas moving with the times than to create a museum for them. Their enterprise was widely approved, the voice of the purists drowned in the general applause. Without their opposition the innovators' victory would have been nothing like so complete, a fact that Wagner himself recognised exactly when in *Die Meistersinger* he put the defence of Beckmesser's purism into the mouth of Hans Sachs, its chief opponent. Bayreuth, in spite of Nazi abuse, was strong enough to retain its identity even after the deluge. It was about the only thing in Germany that did so. And Wagner's two grandsons had the rare pleasure of knocking bits off, and building bits on, that august and still recognisable edifice, while the rest of Germany's potential artists stood scratching their heads before a pile of rubble.

But the Wagner grandsons are interpretative, not creative, artists, and the culturally godless country naturally offers more scope to the interpreters than to the creators, giving them a unique chance to inflate their own importance. There is much of the star complex at large in Germany today: a dynamic conductor's 'interpretation' of a Beethoven symphony, the sensational opera diva doing 'her' Carmen and 'her' Salome, the heavy stage hero making a vehicle of Ibsen and Strindberg, the clever producer's version of Molière, of Nestroy, even of Schiller—these are the things that claim most public attention.

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On the lighter side, numerous cabaret shows purvey that brand of cynicism which was a feature of the German scene after the First World War. Some young artists have made tentative efforts to clothe the cynical attitude in a more permanent form, but the public has not responded. It is, perhaps, the most hopeful sign of all that the German public is not willing to be led again into that particular form of cultural defeatism. The patient is, it appears, willing to be patient, and is not going to despair, because the further she progresses, the further she seems still to have to go.

There is only one face in all the eighty plates of the Capriccios—*Goya's own*

CARICATURE AND CAPRICCIO

A Study of Goya

ANDRÉ MALRAUX

WHAT is a *capriccio*? An illustration to a caption? The majority, however, were added after the drawings as interjections, or even commentaries. Such remarks as: 'Bravo! Who would have thought it? How serious they are! *Buen Viage!*' beneath the engravings and 'She looks a good sort. Not that it matters' under the drawings, are obviously responses to an image, not its forerunners. From the frequent use of personal pronouns: '*They* believe in birds. *She* knows. *She* has a lot of relations', we see Goya's own bewilderment at the emergence of almost unknown figures. He cannot possibly be classed as an illustrator. The drawings are illustrated by the texts. He draws as in a dream: he said himself, in *Vision in the Night*, that he drew his dreams. But the night of his dreams was not so rational: when he is precise about his nightmares, we can see that he has begun to dream his drawings. His genius was obsessional, obsessed by its own creations, and his too precise dreams are much more like drawings than his drawings are like dreams . . .

And even after he has added the caption, he pursues his figures with commentaries. Beneath the flight of demons in *Buen Viage*, he inquires: 'Where is it going, this infernal cohort, piercing the air with its screams?' Sometimes he classifies them: 'These,' he notes, under the plate of *Ghosts* 'are different, gay, amusing, helpful, perhaps rather a little greedy and inclined to practical jokes, but on the whole good little chaps.' 'If you had never appeared,' he writes rather less ironically under another, 'it would have been no great loss.' Other remarks are still more intriguing: 'It is curious that this breed can only be found at night, in the shadows. No one has even been able to discover where they hide during the day. Suppose one could find their burrow, dig it out and show it in a cage!' He never speaks as if he had any control over them. A fantasy he took to be something unforeseen. These images are not so much premeditated as accepted. They are less the product of dreams than of reverie. . . from which they had been banished for centuries.

Ydioma Universal

It was customary at the time to devote albums to one subject only: studies of a city, the unfolding of a biblical narrative. Even the albums of Piranesi are collections of imaginary views. Yet if Goya owes anything to the *Capricci* of Tiepolo, it is rather less than what the *Madhouse* owes to his tapestries.

Although he was not interested in ridiculing 'the particularities of any particular person', his art was so disquieting and the public so inclined to judge an artist rather than to follow him, that for over fifty years the *Capriccios* were taken to be portraits of manners intermingled with fantasies. It was only later that attention was paid to the division of them into two books. The first, consisting of plates 1–43, includes nearly all the so-called portraits of manners. The second, which begins with *The Sleep of Reason*, devotes nine-tenths of its plates to witches, devils and ghosts. There is no doubt that Goya intended this division, for *The Sleep of Reason* is a frontispiece and seems to have been so from the beginning. It is the only plate where we find an inscription already added to the second preliminary drawing: '*Ydioma universal, dibujado y gravado por F. Goya*', an inscription which was to become famous. Now it is in this first half of the album, with its flirtations, intrigues,

femininity, where Goya is dealing least with the imaginary, that his accent is least on caricature. The more the fantastic quality of the picture is evident, the more the irony is accentuated. Why do we forget that for twenty years irony was unknown to him? It seems, oddly enough, to have arisen together with his phantoms, in order to ridicule *them*, rather than his contemporaries. But an ironical drawing presupposes the object of its irony and therefore suggests it . . .

Goya's New Style

The style of Goya's religious drawings had been conventional; that of his cartoons is often highly finished, sparkling with a *brio* that is no whit inferior to the *Singeries*. The drawings for the first *Capriccios*, or a little earlier, have a style still marked by a dependence on mantilla, ribbons, embroidery (as can be seen in many of the pages of the San Lucar albums) and also by rather facile humour, as in the woman with the serpent round the scythe. But Goya had already found another style which could display his genius. It is more than a style. The pencil sketch of *The Garter* may be hesitating, but the plate itself is cut with a knife. We find it in *The man with a carcan* as if it had to be born in pain. It is an angular style, very different from that used for the sketch of a girl with pointed shoes. In the *Capriccio* which is taken from *The Prisoner*, it reaches its full force of simplicity. Goya kept it all his life; it reappears, prodigiously enriched in the *Joseph de Calatranz*, even in the *Christ in the Garden of Olives*, when his drawing was beginning to falter. But even in the least schematic of the *Capriccios*, the festoons have disappeared. There is no longer, in *It was his mother*, any stress on the black mantilla, which has become hair, or on the white headdress; the features have lost all desire to please; the fan has lost, with its edging, that accent which matched the eyes. It is not the disappearance of seductiveness that gives Goya his new style, but it does permit it. And a whole population of fresh faces, in a two-dimensional manner, proliferates before his eyes—the caricatures.

This proliferation was, above all, *something new*. Before comparing the style of the journalists of the nineteenth century with that of the gazetteers of the eighteenth, it is essential to realise the importance of the birth of journalism, without which neither Balzac nor Dickens would have been precisely as we know them. Similarly, caricature, which for centuries had been merely a game, had now become a world.

The World of Caricature

Caricature, like journalism, was a confused world, which included comedy, satire, pamphlets and freedom to a degree quite unknown to painting. Its two spheres were politics and manners, and in the latter it included fashion; that is to say, it was, like journalism, opposed to the tradition of art, since its main objective was inseparable from reality and the caricaturist, who was only interested in finding a vivid expression of a passing spectacle, had no belief in the permanence of his work. Caricature also included the minor but extensive field of peasant subjects. In the eighteenth century the world of the peasant was an exotic world in which courtiers and city artists could incarnate their dreams. To the bourgeois it was a ridiculous world which permitted them to emphasise their own distinction. It was the world of the past, of costume, of the picturesque, as against the world of the future. The noble savage was replaced by the savage pure and simple. Goya knew nothing about this particular world but he did know about peasants. All caricature, however, was the creation of a new world of the imagination. There is a link between many of the *Capriccios* and contemporary caricatures, but it is only a link. Caricature, as heralded by Hogarth, was to spread over the whole of the nineteenth century and not the least of the geniuses of the age was Daumier, also a caricaturist. It is easy to show the influence of the English on the French school, and then a whole cross-play of influences, but it is useless to try to show which engravings of the great English caricaturists influenced Goya. Although he adapted some of them, he was not moved by their style but by the existence of caricature itself, a world which by its very nature escaped from the 'laws of art'. An artist does not live exclusively amidst artistic forms and the arrival of caricature

seems to have had the same general influence then which the cinema has today. Caricature sometimes abandoned comedy in favour of an extravagance which was not far from dream, and many of the engravings make one think of Ensor. However much devoted to reality, caricature is not entirely divorced from the spirit of Carnival and the masks of Italian comedy.

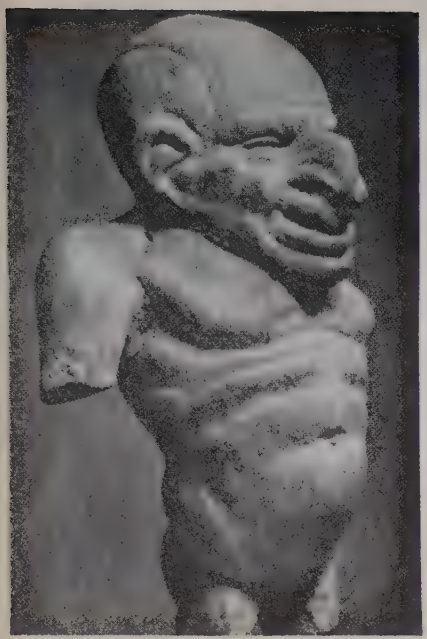
Raw Material

But to Goya, it was more than an influence; it was more, even in its dream aspect, than a liberation from Italianising aesthetics; it was his raw material, just as the newspaper was to Balzac, who discovered his genius by lighting up and transforming an ordinary news paragraph. This raw material, however, could only become art by becoming a style, and the accepted style was opposed to any form of deformation which, exclusively and tardily had, in Italy, been allowed to the fantastic. There are drawings in which Leonardo has attempted what one might call a caricature and they show how alien it was to the genius of the Italian grand style, which seems to work on a face, not to push it to an extremity of comedy or ugliness, but to add beauty or nobility to the already deformed. There are also exercises in which Leonardo systematically enlarges a nose or a chin without modifying the other features. It is only necessary to mask the deformed feature in order to recover the nobility of profile. If he draws a strongly characterised head, it is not to display its weaknesses or vice, but to show the vigour of a *condottiere*. Rome and Alexandria had tried, in their lesser arts, to do the same, but to a limited and less noble effect. And no doubt in the lower reaches of classical art there was a place for the harmony underlying the apparently discordant features of deformity and an understanding also for the hunchback's mask. But antiquity was not deeply interested. It passed no judgment on its grotesques and all valid caricature is the expression of a judgment. Great political caricatures have been the work of the enemies of the powers they depict.

What was abundant at the time was only a manner, and a manner is never enough to create a style, or the magazine illustrators would be past masters. To draw headdresses one yard high, because one feels that existing fashions are ridiculous, is only amusing for a moment. The caricature of Directoire fashions never exceeds a satire on social vanity. The caricature of manners might go further (with Daumier, the friend of Michelet, it has a political and almost a Christian content) but not of its own accord. Character in an imaginative painting is inseparable from a moral verdict. India knew nothing of it, either in its Brahmin or in its Moslem art. Bosch and Brueghel, as soon as they become aware of character, become moralists. In Gothic painting, particularly the German, it is the sinner who is characterised. All caricature of manners must be based on virtue. Hence a possible connection between caricature and the devil: whether depicted or not, he is represented by his creatures. But if he develops a style, it is that of the god which pursues him. Since the irony of Hogarth's painting is based on a Protestant sentimentality, it develops, like Sade's fury, a sentimental style. Goya, who had earlier produced sheaves of Leonardo-like grotesques, ignores or destroys or goes beyond this moralising, since his accusation emerges from depths fantastically deeper than the 'virtue' he is defending.

His Own Face

It is in no sense the individual that he discovers in caricature, in opposition to the classic abstraction, even to the 'grotesque' of which he is still fond. In his etchings he is so little concerned with character, which consists in accentuating what is particular to a certain face—that which would render most distinct from a portrait of the same face, idealised—that his biographers have been arguing for a hundred years as to which of his *majas* is or is not the Duchess of Alba, though one knows well enough what she looked like from the portraits. And sometimes they even come to an agreement, not on a likeness, but on a few lines in the painter's notebooks. So much for the label of 'illustrious portrait painter', seeing the importance he attached to a face! There is only one face in all the eighty plates of the *Capriccios*: his own. The chief characters, not yet masks and



exandrian Grotesque

Caricature by Leonardo da Vinci

he Amateur Concert

Gillray

C

The Man with the Carcan — *Goya*

The Author Hissed — *Contemporary French caricature*

The Opera — *Contemporary French caricature*

Contemporary French caricature

Nobody saw us

Capriccio 79

Sorcerers out walking. 'How serious they are!'
Capriccio 63

If it dawns, let's go

Capriccio 71

Capriccio 49 *They all will fall* *Capriccio 19*

never to be persons, are taken from the theatre.

A Spanish Play

From comedy to the sphere of magic, the theatre was the great, almost the only purveyor of dreams. Hence its influence on all representations of the imaginary, like that of the cinema on the romanticism of our own age. Goya was not unaware of the Italian theatre, fantastic after its own fashion. But to Venice the quality of a world lay in fête and setting, and in spite of Tiepolo, it is a far cry from *La Main Chaude* to the masked balls lingering in a magic melancholy until their last delicate glasswork should be shattered by Napoleon. Instead of these innocent magicians, as tortuous and transparent as a Venetian chandelier, Goya brings in his sorceresses: when Rousseau exalted nature, he replaced a background of tragedy by the settings of comic opera. The first *Capriccios*, with their disguised figures, their duennas, their intrigues, are neither all reality nor all a dream. It is a Spanish play, more complex than his tapestries, an imaginary theatre still sometimes suggesting the flicker of candles.

Both Court and town were cast for the rôle. The capes and serenades, the yellow plumes of the hearses passing slowly across the old heraldic scene, the beggars with their air of baroque saints, all were part of it. The Queen filches the gunpowder from the Army engaged against Portugal, in order not to dissipate the resources of the Treasury which were legitimately destined to provide comedy and opera. Legend has it that the former king had tried to violate the corpse of his wife as it lay between candle flame and rows of praying monks. In the squares they were performing the *auto sacramental* of the Annunciation. St. Michael takes off his black cloak in the presence of the Virgin, disclosing leg-of-mutton sleeves and little mauve wings. She offers him some chocolate, which he refuses, for God the Father has promised him a *paella* for lunch. The Holy Ghost enters, and in front of the astonished Ambassadors, all three characters celebrate their concord in a far from modest fandango.

The demonstrative gesture, the customary expression of feeling, comes from the pantomime, where it was auxiliary to speech. It also comes from the theatre, where the actor has to consider the distant spectator (something from which the cinema has delivered us). Few of such gestures can be found in the *Capriccios*; later, none at all. Goya prefers the puppet to the actor.

There had always been something of the puppet in Spanish dress, and its traditional stiffness, combined with the light, vertical lines and the hair styles of the period, make this still more apparent. There is perhaps something of the kind in the Duchess of Alba, unless it was Goya imposing his own style on her, but it was not in this way that he painted Isabel de Porcel . . .

The marionettes are still timid. As everywhere, they had their types, often drawn from the traditional theatre, the frog-headed Célestine, the doll's-headed lady of fashion, and the series of burlesque figures that you could still see, ten years ago, sitting in the cafés of little towns, looking at the armorial bearings on some church wall, behind which the baroque saints extinguish their torches on altars overhung by the old and blackened swords of byegone captains. The masculine type varies from the oafish seducer to the miser, the dubious monk and the facetious gnome. It loses itself in the shadows of vast cocked hats, delegates of the devil looming above groups of women.

The True Mask

Since the passions were represented by the common factor in faces or gestures which expressed them most intensely, the means of rendering Fear, Joy or Sadness played an important part in the teaching of drawing. But Goya's horror-struck faces scarcely show their fear. One of the laws of baroque aesthetics was that the spectator should be moved by the emotion felt by the character portrayed: in the *Capriccios* there are only figures of fantasy to express the most violent emotions. Swooning martyrs were at the time in all their glory. Goya's art expresses neither the suffering nor the passion of human beings, only their nature. The unmoved faces of his women pursued by monsters, even the distortion of the carnival by its own monsters, its gallants, its coquettes, its procuresses, its

monks and witches, all tend to become a mask. The mask is frankly shown in *Genéalogies*. It comes to life in the animal-headed cavaliers of *Commes ils la lacèrent*. Finally the human body disappears and the symbolic asses of the *Capriccios* make one think of a dinner of heads. But the animal is the baroque aspect of the mask; it is the cherished pet of the period, the monkey, which has become Spanish. Sometimes he appears in Goya's drawings; then, gradually humanised, he disappears or becomes fantastic. The disturbing flying dogs replace the laughing ass, and on the walls of the *Casa del Sordo* we see the back of the Satanic goat. The exasperation of caricature is giving way to a deeper, more troubled expression of life; sometimes the division between the face and that which substitutes for it is no longer clear; the young woman in the second *Capriccio* wears a visor mask, but the old woman with her: is she wearing a mask or do we see her own features?

To Goya a mask is not something to hide the face but to immobilise it. All the great arts which have experience of the devil, the Babylonian, the pre-Colombian, the Chinese and Roman, all know something of the mask. Was it widespread in the eighteenth century? No doubt, particularly in Venice. The visor was worn for amusement, to facilitate intrigues and as a protection against the sun. After a few etchings Goya forgets it and, by petrifying where necessary the features of the living, rediscovers the true mask, which is none other than the face of the dead.

The Devil

Was he aware of this? Probably not. Specialists have taken their time to discover the subterranean corridors which lead from our *Mardis-Gras* to the world of the dead. But if Goya did not know all the ramifications of supernatural, he was nevertheless aware of the connection. Just as others emerge from painful illnesses as mediums, he comes out of his own, trailing mists of another world which trouble and intrigue rather than terrify him. But they put in question the whole world which he has left. His devils are familiars. They are like the tamed beasts who are put through their paces by strolling players. He knows that they are his alone, yet that they can exercise their power of fascination on everyone. His art consists in spacing their appearances and domesticating his madness into language. Neither is he mistaken as to the value of this language. Even if he does not know whence it springs, he recognises the accent of the eternal.

But his relationship to the devil is still confused. He is careful to point out that 'each of his works is a synthesis.' His drawing is indeed a synthesis and sometimes a manic one. His characters? That may be true for his married couples, his traditional Célestines. But does he shape his devils out of all the goblins he has seen? 'Painting selects from the universal' he replies, with effect. Nevertheless the processes which lead to the creation of a comic type and those which produce a monster from the collective unconscious are somewhat different.

The Monster

For the devil, even more than the mask, summons up the monster. Goya re-invents them. They had at one time played an extensive part in art. It took Greece to free the world from their dominion. They had accompanied, rather than expressed the holy in the East, and with it they had died. Christianity had had its devils, which were not a representation of evil but a satire on it. It is somewhat curious that Satan, in Christian art, should have been uniformly ridiculous; taking monster for monster, a man-faced spider in a hole, an octopus with outstretched tentacles, would have been far more terrifying figures than the ones we know. But would the Church have permitted them? Would it not have assumed that such presentations implied an inadmissible contact with darkness? The Church could only accept a representation of the devil which implied the purification of its designer; the only complicities approved were the conscious ones.

Spain had long felt herself involved in the deepest sorcery. Figures by Bosch filled the gloom of the catacombs in which Philip II enshrouded his solitude. For, before Goya, none save Bosch or Brueghel had summoned such persuasive monsters from the deep. Even Brueghel had not gone further than the picturesqueness of

the *Temptations* until he discovered the Scourge, the virago raging through the devouring flames of misery. But, like Brueghel and Bosch, Goya seems still only to have heard a whisper of his secret language. What he does understand is that his adversary is creation. Like the Flemish diabolists, he struggles against wit with the irony of fantasy. He already knows—something which had not been known for 300 years—that his own universe can only replace the real through a new sense of relationship between things and beings. Bosch drew men-houses, fish-devils, roundel-hats, and animated their curious universe by plunging it in time. His devils, wounded in unknown combats, are provided with crutches; damned souls, part crustacean and egg-shell, are for ever falling from a distant background, which he invented at the same time as Leonardo, on evenings of hell as clear as our childhood twilights; on nights of hell with the windmills beating the wind with sails of flame, behind the sad countenance of Man; on nights of hell more heavily charged with poetry than the burning of Rome . . . But Goya—he shows some simpleton being plucked and flayed by women, blends his carnivals with the procession of the Inquisition; tired of masking his characters, he turns their faces into a mask, bestialises them or replaces them by heads of beasts, lends his asses the gestures of men, combines man and beast for his *Sorcerers out walking*, invents the *Chincilla*, the man with padlocked ears, catches the phantom whisper of draped figures draped over a void, gives us the great swollen hand of the *Ghosts*. Everything comes to life through irony, through the presence of familiar sensations amongst the unexpected, which snatches the subject from the temporal and prolongs it in its own right. Sorcerers and demons have to cut their nails, the apparitions keep watch for the dawn, so that they may disappear at the right moment. But Goya has also at his disposal an obscure horde which was not known to the Flemings, and which is not, strictly speaking, so much imagined as captured. Does he himself distinguish between the monsters he derives from a new combination of traditional material, such as *Sorcerers out walking* and those which sleep and reverie have hauled out of the depths of time? The vast hand of the *Ghosts*, the costume without face, are known to psycho-analysts; the feathered man-chicken is one of those strange beasts which they still find inexplicable and which seem to emerge from the deepest levels of the unconscious; Saturn has always been one of the darkest powers of sorcery.

* * *

The caricaturist tried modestly to reduce the world to a single meaning, to reveal what was hidden by isolating the world from what was hidden. Goya wished to extend the world by adding to it whatever prolonged it into mystery. He sheds no light on it whether as moralist or pamphleteer or satirist. He lowers the light until, instead of illuminating his puppets, it projects their vast shadows to infinity. It was customary to class Bosch and Brueghel amongst the caricaturists (Baudelaire did the same) but the deformation which had so radically departed from reality had already rejoined the supernatural.

However stylised the art of the epoch, whether we think of Fragonard or of David, 'objective vision', even of the imaginary, was still considered of capital importance. The very modesty of the caricaturist delivered him from this illusion. Since it was an art of two dimensions, like the anti-classic arts, caricature made no attempt to compete with the real by resembling it. But if we look at an album of contemporary caricatures and then at the first *Capriccios*, we are struck by the presence of a new dimension which is not precisely that of depth.

There is, indeed, a *certain* depth in the *Capriccios*. But it is not a depth of reality. It is not that of the Italian school (the backgrounds of Goya are not horizons). It is not a depth of lighting, since caricature had none. They used lines or low relief, often coloured with flat washes. Goya's lighting is not used to establish a space. Like Rembrandt's lighting, like film lighting, it tends to link whatever it detaches from the shadow with a significance which lies beyond, or, more exactly, with what transcends it. Goya's night is not only black; it is night itself.

Not only the revolutionary creator of a new technique—the twelve-tone method—but a composer of great music

ARNOLD SCHOENBERG

1874–1951

HUMPHREY SEARLE

Mr. Searle, the distinguished young twelve-tone composer, was a pupil of Anton Webern, Schoenberg's first pupil

It is always difficult to make a true assessment of a great and revolutionary figure when he is almost on top of us; and in the case of Arnold Schoenberg, the Austrian composer who died last July in Los Angeles two months before his seventy-seventh birthday, the difficulty has been increased by the voluminous outpourings of both his friends and his foes. So much has been said and written about his technical innovations—not to mention his personal idiosyncrasies—that many people have almost ceased to think of him as a composer at all, and regard him instead as a kind of monster who, for some unaccountable reason, has managed to change the whole course of the music of this century. The reason for this is, perhaps, that while many people are familiar with the new theories which may be deduced from Schoenberg's compositions, far fewer actually know the works themselves. A certain number of them have, of course, been given isolated performances over the years; but it is not till the last few months, during which the B.B.C. Third Programme has been presenting a planned series of performances of Schoenberg's works, that music-lovers in this country have had a real opportunity of studying his development as a whole.

And it is a very remarkable development, especially when one considers where it began—in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, in Vienna, always the most reactionary capital as far as culture is concerned, and then at the height of both bourgeois and Imperial prosperity. Brahms was the musical god; Wagner was just beginning to become 'acceptable', and the young Strauss had not yet shocked the musical world with his 'revolutionary excesses'. It says much for Schoenberg's strength of character and purpose that he did not simply adopt the current post-romantic formula; though his music has always been strongly, indeed violently emotional, there was also an innate constructivist element in him which prevented him either from merely trying to build a bigger and better Valhalla, or from wallowing in the twilight reveries of a Mahler. It was this element which forced him to break with the past and to discover new worlds—worlds which are now open to every composer of today.

Schoenberg's first published works, three sets of songs written just before the turn of the century, sound perfectly mild to us now; but they seemed daring enough at that time to cause a scene of some kind at their first performance—and for many years subsequently nearly every work of Schoenberg and his followers provoked a reaction of this sort from the audience. (One of the most notable of these was in 1913 in Vienna, when Webern's Orchestral Pieces, Schoenberg's First Chamber Symphony and Berg's Songs with Orchestra started a riot which necessitated police action and subsequent legal proceedings.) What Schoenberg's contemporaries found difficult in his early works was that, although they used the accepted romantic and rather lush harmonies of the period, these were handled in a much more polyphonic way than was normal at the time, so that each individual strand in the texture had its own life and importance. This gave contemporary listeners the effect of looking at a familiar face from an entirely strange point of view, and made them feel slightly uncomfortable; and by the time that they had got used to this new approach, Schoenberg had already passed on to something else.

The history of the *Gurrelieder* is a typical example of this process. Schoenberg composed these settings of J. P. Jacobsen in 1900–1, and with the enthusiasm of a young man of twenty-six, decided to score them for the largest forces which could possibly be got together, even having special music paper constructed for this purpose. But the necessity of earning his living (which he had to do by orchestrating operettas), interrupted his work on the orchestral score, and the *Gurrelieder* were not completed till ten years later. The first performance took place in Vienna in 1913, and was a great success; the public had by now assimilated Schoenberg's polyphonic handling of the romantic style—but by then his later works had already suspended tonality.

By the end of the nineteenth century the Romantic Movement in the arts had long outlived its first bloom, and was beginning to decay because it was incapable of further development. Each artist had to find his own answer to the crisis which loomed upon him, and in nearly all cases this took the form of a tighter organisation of the material at his disposal. Some artists simply reacted against the past *in toto* and tried to start completely afresh, as Picasso in his Cubist period or Stravinsky with his neo-classicism; others attempted to continue past tradition, but on a basis in which structure would be at least as important as the ideas to be expressed, and form would no longer be completely sacrificed to emotional content. This can be seen in the intricate thought-structure which underlies Joyce's colloquial language; and it was also the road which Schoenberg took. In his early works he imposed a stricter formal control on the romantic language of Wagner; and, aided by this, he then expanded the language itself, by the use of more and more dissonant harmonies and of chords which did not belong to any particular key. By this means the feeling of key itself was gradually undermined, and in 1908 Schoenberg crossed the border by writing works in no key at all; these include the Piano Pieces Op. 11, the songs from Stefan George's *Buch der Hängenden Gärten*, and the Five Orchestral Pieces.

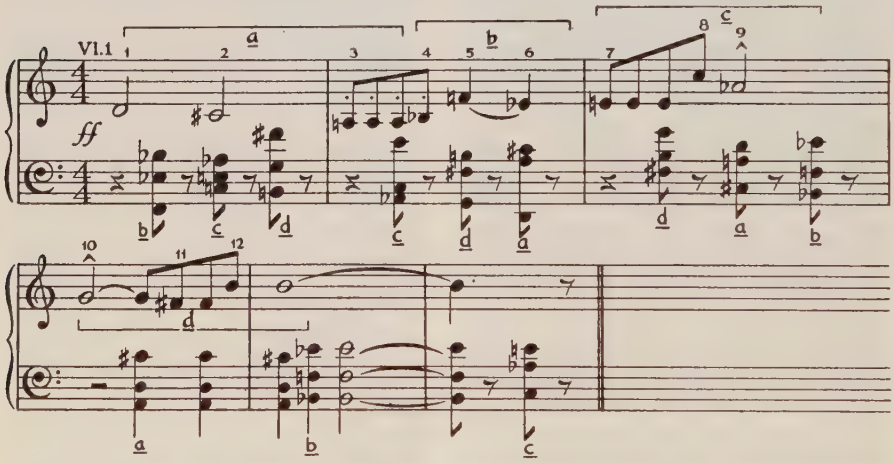
Like all explorers in strange territory, Schoenberg had to move with circumspection at first. The classical forms which he had combined with the romantic content of his early works would not work in the same way in this new world where no key—the essence of classical structures—existed. But form of some kind was necessary for the sake of comprehensibility; and here Schoenberg turned to a contemporary artistic movement—expressionism. He wrote of his music at this period: 'the foremost characteristics of these pieces *in statu nascendi* were their extreme expressiveness and their extraordinary brevity . . . A little later I discovered how to construct larger forms by following a text or a poem. The differences in size and shape of its parts and the change in character and mood were mirrored in the shape and size of the composition, in its dynamics and tempo, figuration and accentuation, instrumentation and orchestration.' This was the period of *Pierrot Lunaire*, the expressionist dramas *Erwartung* and *Die glückliche Hand* (the latter to a text by Schoenberg himself) and the astonishing Songs with Orchestra, Op. 22. In these the dramatic and emotional possibilities of the texts are exploited to the uttermost by the use of new and strange sonorities—sonorities which still sound remarkable forty years after they were written. Schoenberg, in fact, was to some extent using the impressionist technique of Debussy (though in a much more radical form) for expressionistic purposes; and a recent performance of *Pierrot Lunaire* in London showed

that the power of this music is not in the least impaired by the lapse of time.

The Twelve-tone Method

But, clearly, if Schoenberg's music was to continue to develop, it could not for ever keep within the limitations imposed by a literary text or a dramatic story; it had to be able to stand on its own feet as 'pure' music. This meant that the problem of its formal construction again had to be tackled, but this time from a different point of view. It was obviously useless to try to impose the laws governing classical music, which was based entirely on key relationships, on music which had no key. What was needed was a new method which arose out of the essence of keyless music itself. To be slightly technical for a moment, the position now reached was that, instead of having the seven notes of the major and minor scales predominating over the other five 'accidentals' or ancillary notes, there was now a free and equal use of all the twelve notes of the chromatic scale. Schoenberg found that in his compositions of this later period (1921–3) he was tending to use these twelve notes in a certain definite order throughout each piece—though of course the order varied from one piece to the next—and he eventually adopted this as the basis of his technique, the 'method of composing with twelve tones (i.e. notes) which are related only with one another', as he called it. To this method he remained faithful in the majority of his works for the rest of his life; it was at once adopted by his disciples Berg, Webern and others, and today it is used by a large number of composers in many countries of the world.

This method of writing is quite simple in essence. Each piece is based on a series containing all the twelve notes of the chromatic scale arranged in any order the composer may wish; this order is adhered to throughout the piece, but three variants of the original series can also be used—its inversion, retrograde form, and retrograde inversion. In addition, any of these four forms may be transposed up or down so as to start on any of the twelve notes of the scale, thus giving forty-eight possibilities in all. From this material both the harmony and the melody of the piece is derived—i.e. the series may be used horizontally as a theme, or vertically in the form of chords, or both at once. An example from the opening of Schoenberg's Fourth String Quartet (1937)[1] makes this clear.



Here the twelve-note series is used as a theme by the first violin, and is simultaneously divided into four three-part chords (*a*, *b*, *c*, *d*) which are played by the other instruments. While the first violin plays the notes (D, C sharp, A) which constitute chord *a*, the other instruments play chords *b*, *c* and *d*; then, in the second bar, the first violin plays the notes of chord *b* (B flat, F, E flat) while the other instruments play chords *c*, *d* and *a*; and so on throughout the passage.

[1] *Reproduced by courtesy of G. Schirmer Inc., New York (Chappell & Co. Ltd., London)*

At first sight this process may appear extremely mathematical, and it has been attacked by many critics for this reason. But second thoughts show that this discipline is no more formal than the rules which govern the structure of a Bach fugue or the usual first movement of a classical sonata; all music students learn these rules at colleges and academies, and take them for granted when they themselves compose. Further, all modern composers abide by a set of rules of some kind, even if they have invented these for themselves; the fact that one can instantly recognise the music of Bartók, Sibelius, Stravinsky or Vaughan Williams means that these composers regularly use certain easily identifiable procedures, to which they remain as faithful as Schoenberg did to his. All music, and in fact all artistic creation, must bind itself by some kind of discipline, or the result would be unintelligible chaos; and if Schoenberg's methods had not been fertile, they would not have commanded such widespread respect and adherence amongst so many composers.

It is, of course, important to distinguish between the adoption of a fruitful technical method and the artistic quality of the resulting composition. Schoenberg himself was never in any doubt about this; in a letter written to me about eighteen months before his death he said:

'In my opinion, in the formula—the method of composing with twelve tones, the accent does not lie so much on twelve tones but on the art of composing.'

In fact, he was a composer who happened to have made some important theoretical discoveries, and not (as is often imagined) a pedant who made his music fit his theories. Even after the discovery of the twelve-note technique, he wrote several works which used it in a modified or limited way, and some which did not use it at all; he simply followed his creative imagination, like any other true composer. And of course it is not necessary for the listener to analyse music of this kind from the point of view of the twelve-note technique in order to appreciate it, any more than it is necessary to know technical details about brushwork or quality of paint in order to appreciate a picture; the passage already quoted from Schoenberg's fourth quartet is a forceful and impressive opening to a major chamber music work, and the technical methods involved are of no artistic importance to anyone except the composer.

So we must return to our starting-point, to Schoenberg as a composer pure and simple. The most striking things in his music are its imagination, variety and dynamic power—qualities which appear in all his works from the earliest to the last. It is music which compels attention; it arouses emotion and stimulates thought at the same time. It is not always easy to take in at a first hearing, not only because the language is unfamiliar to us at present, but also because Schoenberg's thought itself is not simple—the nearest parallels to his quality of mind are perhaps to be found in the major works of Bach and Beethoven, which make similar demands on the listener. The language difficulty is of course one that will lessen with the passage of time and with increasing familiarity with the works themselves, and there are indeed signs that this process is already taking place; already many people can see that Schoenberg's music, far from being perpetually 'neurotic' and 'morbid' (as it has frequently been labelled), in fact expresses a very wide variety of moods. There is genuine comedy in the *Serenade* and some movements of *Pierrot Lunaire*; there are most exciting dramatic qualities in such works as *Erwartung*, the *Dance round the Golden Calf* (from the opera *Moses and Aaron*) and *A Survivor from Warsaw*; there is lyrical tenderness in *Das Buch der Hängenden Gärten*, the string quartets and the *Fantasy* for violin and piano, and magistral size and impressiveness in the Variations for Orchestra and the Violin Concerto. One could prolong the list almost endlessly; but at any rate it is clear that, as and when Schoenberg's music becomes more and more performed, appreciation of it will steadily grow, and he will be remembered not only as a revolutionary creator of new technique, but, first and foremost, as a composer of great music.

AN ANGEL IN HIS HOUSE

GEORGE FRIEL

She was very much in love with him, but whether her excess of love made her doubt if so much could be returned, or whether she had in fact the intuition ascribed to her sex, she had no faith in his feelings for her. She was only twenty, and her reading was limited to women's weeklies. When she indulged in serious conversation, it went to her head and she staggered round the twin topics of the nature of man and the existence of true love. Like other metaphysicians, she never came to any conclusion about either.

He was one of her schoolgirl idols when she was in the fourth form and he was in the sixth, and it was a great pleasure to her that, when they had both risen to the rank of former pupils, he paid her so much attention at a reunion dance. They went about together for a year after that, and her troubles with him confirmed her tendency to look at life in terms of potted wisdom, as 'You've got to take the rough with the smooth'; 'There's no such thing as real love', and 'Men are brutes'. He had set out on a university course as a medical student, but the change in domestic circumstances after the death of his father forced him to find a job at once and he went to work near the university in a shop that sold medical text-books. He was tall, fair, in boisterous good health, fond of practical jokes, rather coarse, and altogether a knowledgeable young man.

So knowledgeable he alarmed her, and his brashness led her to put an end to their friendship. At least she tried to, but all she meant was that he should put an end to his extreme demands on her and continue more sedately. He chose to see no alternative, and while she sat at home waiting for him to call, thinking he understood and accepted what she meant, he found a nurse in the Western Infirmary to please him. When it became clear that he was not coming back, she wept in bed every

night for a month and then wilted a little, getting her compensation for the episode by looking upon herself as a woman wise beyond her years, old before her time, experienced beyond her mother's suspicions.

Before another year was out, she heard from her friends that he was always asking about her, and one of them obligingly gave him the telephone number of her new office. She was not unprepared for his voice when he telephoned her late one autumn afternoon, and yet she had difficulty with her breath and feared he could hear her heart. The conversation was slightly stilted. They were embarrassed, falling into gaps in the uneven terrain of their manœuvring, then scrambling out with a self-conscious hum and a haw. After five minutes beating about the bush, he put the question to her and she agreed to see him again.

Soon it was as bad as ever, but although she said she had learned her lesson and told him he would never again break her heart by walking out on her because she would keep her heart to herself, all she had in fact learned was she could not do without him. She had just been getting used to it when he telephoned, and not only the depressing dullness of that state, but the long journey she had made to get there, seemed to her equally unthinkable again.

Of course she was often happy with him, simply and untroubledly happy, and there were evenings when he was content to hold her hand in the pictures and no more, and she thought that was wonderful, but it never lasted.

'You know,' she told her confidant in the audit office, Mr. Barlow, 'I'd be perfectly happy just to listen to him talking, just to sit beside him at the fire. But him! He's different.'

It became so bad again that she thought she would have to leave him for good, for her own good. But she was determined that this time he would not leave her under the pretext of failing to see the alternative she offered; she would do the leaving, without any alternative, and frankly and firmly tell him she could not and would not go on. She burst out with it impulsively one evening when he hedged about coming round to her parents two nights later, on New Year's Eve. He knew them already, he had no reason to be shy—her father in particular liked him, but still he hedged. He spoke as if the Scotch custom of a family gathering at Hogmanay was silly, too ridiculous for him to follow.

'You'd think we weren't good enough for you, the way you talk,' she said angrily. 'You're selfish, utterly selfish. You want everything your way, but will you do the least thing for me? No, never! I don't believe you could ever love anybody but yourself. It's the one thing all the time with you. All you do is rush at things, and you never think of anybody else's feelings. The best thing we can do is to stop seeing each other.'

To her dismay he agreed at once. He said, not without a touch of gallantry, that she was too much for him. She would have preferred him to say too good, but he said too much. He could not resist her. It was dangerous to be alone with her, and lately they had managed too many evenings alone. She was quite right; it would be better if they stopped seeing each other.

'Otherwise it can only end in disaster,' he ended remotely.

Only her astonishment kept her from weeping on the spot. She was almost hysterical at the calmness with which he announced he could not be calm in her company, at the complacency with which he took her impulsive suggestion that they should stop meeting. His attitude illuminated for her the insincerity of her proposal, and that, too, was an additional pain. She had thought she was sincere when she meditated it, and she could not understand how it became any the less sincere simply because it found an unguarded expression. She almost shook him as she stood clutching his lapels in their good-night embrace, standing at the porch with him at midnight, the two of them behind the half-closed storm-doors and she with her back to the hall-door.

'It's all very well for you,' she said. 'It's just what I said. You don't care for anybody but yourself. You'd like to pick me up and drop me just whenever it suits you. You could go away tonight and not bother your head if you never saw me again.'

'It was your idea in the first place,' he said stolidly.

In the end they agreed to meet again on New Year's Eve to discuss the proposal that they should not meet again. By habit they made to go to a cinema, but there were queues everywhere, and because it was cold and wet, he said they should go to his mother's house. She had been there before, mildly welcomed by a widow who seemed distracted from matters immediately in front of her and continually casting some unuttered calculation. So she agreed meekly enough; perhaps they would come by half an hour alone while his mother pottered and panned in the kitchen, and they could settle their future in a heart-to-heart talk, or perhaps he would not want to settle it and everything would go on as before. She dimly saw that she didn't know what she wanted, and as they trudged to his mother's house, there was a narrow chasm of silence between them, so easy to cross if she just looked at it rationally, but impossible for her to leap first, and he said nothing.

Then, to her embarrassment, the widow gave her a welcome even more remote than usual; her unfinished calculation seemed more retrospective than ever, and to make her position worse, she was quickly aware that the mother and son were on bad terms. As she waited alone in the front room at a pleasant enough fire, she could hear them in the kitchen carrying on from where they had left off. The mother came through to get a scarf, and without open rudeness ignored her and went back to the kitchen. She heard the son's brusque voice and the mother's sharp reply.

'When you come back from Hilda's,' he was saying.

'If I come back,' snapped the mother.

She heard the front door bang and felt prickly with discomfort.

He came through to her calmly.

'What's wrong?' she asked timidly.

'Oh, nothing,' he said, and kissed her warmly. 'Just one of her moods.'

There was no discussion, no heart-to-heart talk to settle their future. She was always weak when he attacked her, and her muddle about what she wanted made her weaker. He started at once making love to her in the same old way, and she tried for a moment to keep him off with a cold, astonished question.

'How can you? You quarrel with your mother like that, you let her go without even trying to make it up—oh, you're selfish! You think of nobody but yourself. And on New Year's Eve too!'

He slowed down and became all gentle and explanatory. It was a silly little quarrel. It meant nothing. She was often like that. She said things she didn't mean. She would come back as if nothing had happened. She always went round to see Hilda, his married sister, when she was cross with him, and stayed there till bedtime.

'How could I leave you?' he asked fondly. 'You don't want me to leave you, now do you? Tell me the truth.'

The reconciliation he offered was too much for her. He had crossed the narrow chasm of silence, and they stood on the the same side, murmuring loving words together, mutually caressing. Within half an hour he had overcome her scruples and had his way. She held out as long as she could, exercising an effort she felt in herself was terrific, but in one last moment, as he persisted, she loosened her grasp and she was beaten and no longer cared.

After it was all over, she wept for ten minutes, and privately wondered what she was fussing about. She was disappointed in herself, that she had done what she had sworn she would never do, and disappointed in what she had done, that it was hardly worth so much curiosity, so much fighting, so much excitement. But he came back to her gratefully, and she took the chance to coax him to come round to her parents after all. He still jibbed at the idea, and she had to break away from him forcibly and threaten to go home alone, to go and get her hat and coat and show she was serious, before he finally agreed to accompany her. The party was warmed up when they arrived, crowded and noisy, for her father was a sociable man. She sat in a corner and drank more than was good for her, and when her seducer stood up to leave the party he had never wanted to attend, she startled the company by mouthing drunkenly, 'Don't let him go! Don't let him go! If he goes away, I'll never see him again.'

She began to cry, talking away to herself indistinctly, and everybody asked everybody else who had given her all the

drink. But since it was Hogmanay and nobody was quite sober, her condition was looked upon as amusing rather than serious, the more so since young love was always a topic for a joke.

She was back at work on the second day of the New Year and felt an urge to confide in Mr. Barlow again. She had to wait till after lunch to get him alone, and slipped away from the canteen back to her seat in the typing pool with her knitting. Mr. Barlow sat in the farthest corner. He never went to the canteen, but lunched at his supervisor's table from a flask that contained something that wasn't tea and a package of rye bread. There was supposed to be something wrong with his stomach. He was middle-aged, or looked it, and if he was married, widowed, divorced or single, nobody knew. He listened but said little. Perhaps that was why she had got into the habit of returning early from her lunch to chat with him alone. She could never have said if she even as much as liked him; he was beyond liking or disliking. But he had always kept her secrets, and the little he said made her feel friendly. He was like a wall that looks adequate, not a splendid piece of architecture, but the right height to lean on.

She parked her knitting and her bag, took off her coat and strolled up to him.

'Hello, Helen,' he said, putting his flask away and screwing up the paper bag that had carried his sandwiches. No one ever actually saw him eat, but it was assumed he did so since he was apparently still alive.

She sat down across the table from him and plunged into the heart of it.

'It's all over, finished, *zu Ende*,' she said. Having once found he understood her fifth-form German, she occasionally used to him such phrases as she could remember.

He looked at her deeply and waited.

She told him all she could as openly as she could, getting round the difficulty of directly telling him she had lost her chastity by saying, 'So when his mother went out we were all alone till near on midnight, and you can think what you like.'

Whatever he thought, he said nothing. She blurted on.

'Well, anyway, I know what I'm missing now. And it's not worth all that much.'

'I agree,' he said. 'But it's a pity you had to find it out that way.'

She took a cigarette from him sadly and he looked at her curiously as he lit it. She had good looks but no beauty, a strong body and a wilful mouth.

'But why are you so sure it's all over?' he asked. 'All that talk of ending it was before you—'

He stopped and left it without words.

'I know,' she said. 'But—oh, I don't know. I don't know what's in his mind.'

Because they seemed to encourage her a little, he repeated some commonplace words of comfort he did not believe, and out of simple kind-heartedness, he elaborated his platitudes, looking at her eyes and marvelling at the burden women took upon themselves in the name of love. She sat staring into the future, and he saw she was at once frightened and allured by the threat of motherhood. The worry in her eyes faded as he chattered on, speaking to her at length for once, and he was amazed to see it go so quickly. He was certain that even if her conqueror did telephone her during the week, he would not take long after that to arrange his exit; or if he ever did marry her, which he could not believe, then indeed

> No sweet aspersions would the heavens let fall
> To make that contract grow, but barren hate,
> Sour-eyed disdain and discord would bestrew
> The union of their bed with weeds so loathly
> That they would hate it both . . .

But instead of saying so, he said gently, making the sentimentality palatable with an ironic smile. 'No, don't you worry. You'll be all right. I'll live to see you engaged at the summer and married at Christmas. And you'll be a loving, attentive wife, an angel in the house, and you'll send him out with his trousers pressed, and you'll polish his shoes for him and—'

'Oh no,' she interrupted him quickly. 'Oh no! That's one thing I'll never do. I can't imagine anything more servile. There are some things I wouldn't do for any man, and polishing his shoes is one of them.'

A WALK BEFORE DINNER

GIORGIO BASSANI

Signor Bassani, who was born in Bologna in 1916 but lived in Ferrara till 1943, is now Associate Editor of Botteghe Oscure, *in which this story, under the title* Una Passeggiata Prima di Cena, *first appeared. This is a long and beautifully-constructed story of life in an Italian provincial city, starting at the turn of the century. The first part, which appeared last month, introduced the two main characters, Elia Corcos, the young doctor, and Gemma Brondi, a nurse and the daughter of a poor peasant family*

Translated by Ġwyn Morris

ELIA CORCOS! What an odd name! His clothes, the professional frock-coat which he evidently intended to provide him with an air of severity to offset the youthfulness of his smooth beardless face, the white silk tie, the black hat with its wide, upturned brim, and everything slightly faded and wearing a little thin—second-hand clothes, perhaps; then the way he spoke, his occasional use of expressions and isolated words in dialect which he uttered mincingly and almost self-consciously; his face apparently moulded in some fragile and delicate material. Everything pointed to the fact that he belonged to a different social class. However humble his family might be, however poor he might be, it was quite obvious that he was not one of *them*. In comparison with that factor, every other consideration, including the fact that he was not a Catholic but a Jew (or rather, as he specified, an Israelite, and so, as Cesira told Letizia the next day, after consulting the Parish Priest of St. Andrew's, 'One of those who crucified Our Lord'): every other consideration, then, was of purely secondary importance.

At the time, the only feelings his name aroused were those of social inferiority, class consciousness and a sense of embarrassment, due to their uncultured way of speaking—in short, feelings which our peasant class has invariably experienced when brought into contact with the bourgeoisie. In particular is this true of the handful of families which for centuries, from the time of the rule of the Cardinal Legates, settled within the city walls to cultivate their extensive market-gardens, and where they still dwell in near-isolation. And after all, what other reaction could Corcos' name have aroused? Some years were still to elapse before his name was illumined by the blaze of publicity, when people would begin to say—'A great doctor!' Albeit with an ironical smile and a glint of scorn and envy in the eyes of the speaker as he gazed across the fifty kilometres of plain, sun-scorched in summer, fogbound in winter, separating the bastions of F.—a solitary sandstone pentagon rising sheer above the surrounding hemp-maize plantations—from the animated industrial centre of the province

with its bustle of traffic, nestling to the south at the foot of the hills: 'A great doctor'—they would maintain—'and if F. were not F., but B.' We have referred to a blaze of publicity. Perhaps it would be more precise to speak of the steady clear light of fame which for at least three generations was to faithfully trace the career of Elia Corcos until, with the passing of time, he became a kind of civic institution, a symbol of the municipality. And this light was due to rise over the city with the dawn of a new century.

'If F. were not F. but B.': The witnesses of Elia Corcos's flourishing old age would muse years and years afterwards—there had been a moment, a moment lost like his youth in the gloom of the last century which was a revelation of the singular analogy to be drawn between his fortunes as a doctor and those of the town in which he was born. Signora Gemma, poor Signora Gemma had been dead for some time. The celebrated Doctor Murri who, so it was said, had been Elia Corcos's companion at the University at B., and had become the pride of B. and the nation, on being summoned to the sick bed of the young Duchess Costabili who had settled in our town with her husband two years before, had exclaimed, 'I don't understand. You expressly make me come all the way from B., while here at F. you have my very dear friend, Elia Corcos, who is much more able than I.'

This stage in the life of Doctor Corcos, or rather of Professor Corcos (he had undertaken a lectureship in diseases of the heart and the respiratory tract during the First World War), was generally considered to have coincided with the reprehensible action of a certain Socialist Member of Parliament. It is not known how founded this belief was, and indeed it is but another indication of how the threads of life become tangled and past events take on a dream-like legendary character. This Member of Parliament had blackmailed Crispi—the great Crispi—into agreeing that the most important railway junction in northern Italy should be based at B. instead of F. B. owed its good fortune and prosperity to that faithful decision odiously obtained through the machinations of a Socialist, but none the less effective and advantageous to B. which in a short time became the most considerable town in Emilia. The spectacle of the great railway station at B, where twenty trains could draw up at once, with its illuminated restaurants all shining glass, its shadowy inviting waiting-rooms, its international traffic, second only to Milan, all this dazzled from afar the listless eyes of fellow-citizens. Tenacious and fortunate champions of their town's interests in B., inept government administrators in F., the Socialists wherever they had a hand in government affairs, for some reason or another, were always in the wrong: 'If F. were not F., if our commune were in other hands.' Like that of the town, the life of Professor Corcos had been poised for an instant lost in time between light and darkness. Like all his most worthy fellow-citizens—so it was said—he had been a victim of the 'notorious materialist doctrines' propagated by the Socialists and the Freemasons; the Socialists or the Freemasons, according to the milieu where the doctor was under discussion. In the middle-class dining-rooms and the smoky lounge of the commercial club, critics, incidentally deploring the lack of resonance in his name, pointed their observations here and there with a gesture of hatred or a grimace of distaste; or else in the inviolate chambers of the Archbishop's palace where in different circumstances names like Corcos would only have been mentioned with an air of squeamishness: 'Corcos, *videlicet* Cohen, Levi, etc., etc.' Thus the Monsignor, with lofty pensive brow and short greying hair, feigning ignorance of the celebrated Minister's adherence to Freemasonry, and knitting his dark thick eyebrows into a line with his thin straight nose as he pictured to himself the ghetto gates smashed in by the fury of the populace a decade or so on. But all differences over the name of Corcos miraculously ceased and there prevailed a most steadfast feeling of class solidarity and the general conviction that very little is required to succeed in life: a modicum of shrewdness, a fillip of healthy ambition. Corcos's inherent merit was undeniable, and had it been supported by those secondary but indispensable qualities, all the glory which Murri had gained for himself would have shone down upon the picturesque white

curls of his former university companion. As for Gemma, poor Signora Gemma—although Elia Corcos had always disapproved of the indiscreetly curious public prying beyond the front door of his home in Via Coramari, the door which he had always loved to slam behind him on his return at dusk from his usual walk along Corso Po, and although as if to comply with a tacit nevertheless expressed wish on his part, no one in town had ever paid too much attention to her—all at once, not even her modest figure, insignificant in its humdrum domestic setting, could escape the fate of every person and thing which had been intimately associated with Elia Corcos and his life, namely, transformation to something of a symbol or an example. Elia Corcos was a man of talent and refinement, who from his youth had been accepted in the best society and even by aristocracy. At this point it should be mentioned that there was a certain name which, linked with Corcos's, stimulated the minds of many of his fellow-citizens, influencing them to make slight but important alterations in dates and facts—because one must face it—nowhere more than in small provincial towns do past and future appear for what they really are—that is to say, in the language of a certain contemporary trend of philosophy—as nothing more or less than 'sentimental dimensions', mere accepted conventions. This name, uttered with a smile and a sly wink, opened a whole world of analogy, comparison and deduction to a fertile imagination. It was the prophetic name of the Duchess Costabili, who, *et pour cause*, trusted only in him, would have only him to attend her in preference to more distinguished members of the medical profession and even etc., etc. . . . That a young man of such promise should have been forced to marry so far beneath his station was clear confirmation, if that were necessary, that he, in common with his fellow-citizens, deserving of better fortune, had fallen victim to some underhand plot, at the very moment he was spreading his wings. With Elia Corcos in the forefront, they had all had their wings clipped. They had been cheated of their due by another. Glory, power, love—those great eternal words which lodged in their throats, so fierce was their sense of shame, flourished in their imagination, and behind the four castle towers rising in the centre of the town, which are the first to greet the traveller from the country, shone a prodigiously bright sky, the vault of heaven filled with all the repressed passions of mankind.

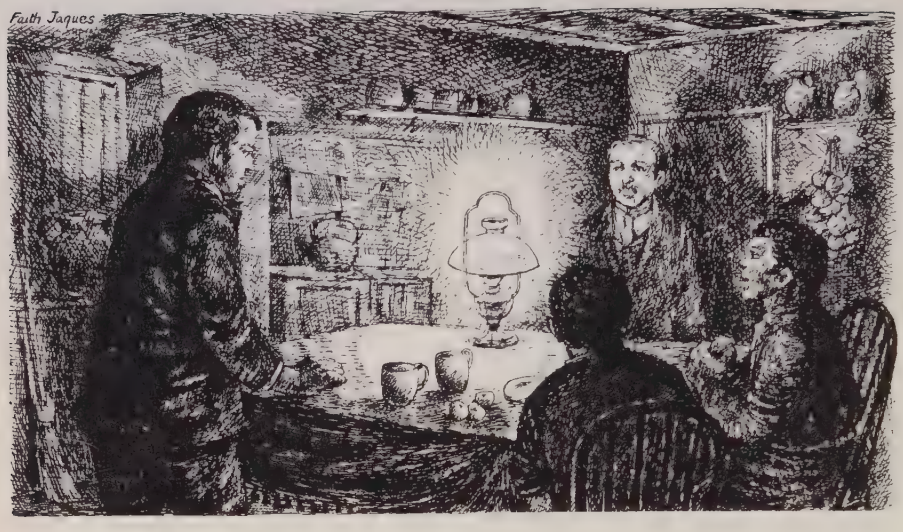
And, just as the blind poet finds reward and consolation in his muse, so the outraged and derelict *génies manqués* gained strength from the realisation that they possessed riches which no one could ever wrest from them. They had lost all—but not, thank God, an active imagination, the inquiring and revealing force of free thinking. For reasons of discretion and prudence I do not intend to embark on an investigation of the forces which, according to circumstances, throw open or forbid to the sons of the bourgeoisie the drawing-rooms and bedrooms of the nobility. But it was due to the virtues of the mind which have just been mentioned that it was possible to magically restore to the receding past the freshness of the present, spanning in a leap plains and mountains, and, eavesdropping on a famous historical personage in his

private study at the height of his political success, observe his bronzed muscular hand, 'a ruler's hand', in the act of grasping impatiently, and yet at the same time reluctantly, the pen which had decided the destiny of an ancient and noble city, of a populous and industrious province, and finally—as a fitting conclusion—shed a heart-felt tear over the simultaneous and interdependent outrage which had been inflicted on the parallel careers of Dr. Corcos and of the town which had given him birth.

Gemma's position was quite clear. Most people asserted with that condescension typical of relations between our middle-class and the lower-classes that she had been a woman of too humble an upbringing to fulfil what would have been reasonable to expect from the wife of a 'superior being'. In a way, the sacrifice had to be made without her realising it. After all, it was not surprising. Inspiration and lofty experience which gave one an opportunity at least of *knowing* and pitying (for truth and tears are the bitter heritage of whomsoever loses and sacrifices) could not have touched a person who with every probability had not even completed her elementary education.

These, then, were the thoughts which years after were destined to pass through the mind of the third generation of our fellow citizens (in other words, those who grew old between the two wars); these were the thoughts concerning Dr. Corcos and his strange, not to say mysterious, early marriage. Of course, Signora Gemma had not been up to her position. She could not understand. Neither could she aspire to any height. But perhaps a more impartial objective reporter might have asked himself the question 'was it right to dismiss her so lightly?' She had been dead for some time, and the only memory of her would have been at most some faded photograph or other. Then, again, who could recapture the essence of her original existence, who retrace the tortuous path the ideas about her had taken before becoming public gossip?

But suppose someone was moved by a warmer, less objective feeling than that which prompted some of our fellow citizens to speak of Corcos with a slightly bitter smile (a vague, idle, self-indulgent sentiment which he, for his part, studiously eschewed). 'My dear friends,' he seemed to say, flamboyantly doffing his hat across the road to obsequious young colleagues of the last call-up. 'My dear friends,' seemed to say his ceremonious, gallant and yet detached greeting which set on a pedestal to be worshipped from afar a great lady of quality like the Duchess Costabili, when, bejewelled and youthfully radiant, she had appeared in a box at the theatre Tosi-Borghi, at that performance long ago of *La Traviata*—perhaps one of the first ever to be given in F. Then the doctor turned immediately to wave an equally dashing salute to two working-class girls, Gemma and Cesira Brondi, tucked away up in the gallery but by no means hidden from his piercing eyes which peered upwards behind his glinting spectacles. 'My dear friends all,'—he seemed to assure the whole town as he went down Corso Po every evening before dinner bowing to left and right. 'But pray step aside for me to pass'—I repeat, suppose our observer had been able to trace the lost source of that first idea, the primordial intuition of that infinitesimal fraction of time which, as the belated admirers of Elia Corcos argued between 1920 and 1940, had been the crux of the whole situation (that idea Gemma had immediately accepted inwardly with almost servile submission, even if it had provoked at the same time in overbearing contradiction a first instinctive reaction of impatience and rebellion —the first of many future scenes which came to be regarded in the family circle as her own peculiar outbursts in dialect, to be talked about amongst relations who listened not knowing whether to laugh or be shocked). Right from the beginning, perhaps from that very evening when he decided to enter the house and make his formal request, and Gemma had afterwards said goodbye to him at the street door—the moon was so brilliantly full that Cesira, not daring to lean out over the window-sill, had tried in vain to catch even a word of the hurried whispering between the two lovers—perhaps from that very evening he had begun to place the responsibility for everything on her, maintaining that in a way marriage had been



forced upon him by her family. Then our hypothetical reporter would have probably had to reconstruct the scene in the gloomy country kitchen of the Brondi house, on a warm summer night in 1888, just at that moment when the face of thirty-year-old Elia Corcos, emerging from the surrounding shadow, showed up ghastly white in the circle of light around which the family was gathered.

Shadow—light; and in the centre the tablecloth shone spotlessly white.

Yes, the time necessary to 'make the sacrifice' had been very short, and no one knew it better than Gemma. Just the time needed for a short series of actions; Elia bending, thrusting his head forward and offering to their gaze a deathly white face, much paler than usual, as if suddenly the blood had been drained away. He had been afraid, no one knew it and remembered it better than Gemma. He wanted to get away, escape from the trap in which he had fallen, perhaps in which he had wanted to fall. After all, wasn't it he himself who at that moment was asking for the old drunkard's daughter in marriage? Wasn't he it himself who was ruining his own chances? And why? In the name of God, just to do the right thing in the case of presumed pregnancy? Yes, he was afraid. Shadow—light. What should he do? Run away? Defy her father and brothers and never show his face again? Or give in without a struggle? And finish up in the same way as so many doctors like him. At that moment two ways were open before him. And as his tense face yielded to a smile, he realised that he would choose the smoothest, the easiest way, but wait . . . no, no . . . he must decide at once and finish the farce once and for all.

IV

Smoother, easier? Certainly in a literal sense (the sense which Elia Corcos as a good positivist professed to prefer) there was no doubt that it was that sort of road, and measuring it yard by yard it would not carry him very far away. A stroll, just a stroll about a kilometre and a half, two at the outside. This purely topographical detail had its importance, and if we think of it, attempting at the same time to imitate Elia's subtle smile to add spice to the paradox, we can draw an interesting inference from the ten years which after his marriage Dr. Corcos needed to establish himself in the town and to reap the first fruits of his fame. After the wedding, they had been obliged to take rooms in his father's house, the house of old Solomon Corcos in Vicolo Torcicoda, a narrow street in the unhealthy heart of the ghetto. There was born Iacopo, Elia's first child, and then Reuben. Ten years at the end of

which he was able to buy a house of his own: *parva sed apta mihi*, as he put it. This fact, apparently so insignificant, might well serve to explain why a passage of time considerable enough to touch with white Elia's temples and moustache, could seem, as it did seem to the characters in our story when they took up permanent residence in Via Colamari, just about as long as it would take to walk a quarter of the way round the city walls. Half an hour's walk (as you left the Brondi's house you turned half right along the lane which hugs the circumference of the city walls; or climbing up to the fortress you could follow the tortuous track hardly visible in the grass which ran higher up and parallel to the other between two avenues of huge ancient trees or across open clearings), a kind of diversion, but easier and quicker than any possible short cut through the maze of mediaeval alleys in the centre of the town. And then, after leaving on the left the bell-tower of the church of Borgo San Giorgio, skirting the high wall of the asylum and glimpsing from that height away over the broad plain the blue undulating haze of the hills of B. (while on the other side the red expanse of the town had slowly rotated a quarter of a turn on its axis) then all at once you were back in sight of the house, a picture of domestic tranquillity, below you; its grey walls invaded by creeper, the green shutters half closed to protect the interior from the violent glare of the sun; the front garden silent, and an alternating effect of sunlight and cloud adorning the walls with an ever-changing succession of livid and sombre hues and flickering designs, giving an impression of something living, something human. Almost nothing has changed on this, the south side of the town, in half a century, apart from the appearance around 1910, there on the right on the outskirts of the residential zone, of the gasometer's squat cylinder, and then about 1915 more than a kilometre outside the walls the great camouflaged hangars at the airport, of which the bombing in the Second World War has left no trace. So, as you look down from the fortress towards the fields, you see once again what must have been a familiar sight, the huge ancient panorama, dotted with scattered farms and edged over on the horizon with tiny rows of poplars. Looking down on this scene, one would have said then, as now, that it was a country house with its little farmyard in front, the woodshed on the ground floor and the lawn separated from the back garden by a hedge perpetually populated with chickens and the orchard which, bounded by walls bristling with broken glass divided in the middle by a path, in springtime blooming with curly purple irises, stretched beyond the hedge down to the foot of the fortifications.

As from this side the house did not present a forbidding exterior, this was the way that Papa and the brothers Brondi, following the track skirting the city wall, and attempting to avoid a certain embarrassment, invariably chose whenever they came to call. They regularly announced their arrival by shouting or by a crude and strident whistling (there was nothing for it but to go and open the orchard gate for them)—it was as if the duly polished brass plate bearing the words 'Elia Corcos—doctor—surgeon' which adorned the austere front door in Via Coramari, perturbed or annoyed them; as if they identified something of Gemma's character (for more than ten years she had been Signora Corcos) in the aloof appearance by day of the front of the house, masking behind the first floor shutters, the reception room, and the great kitchen with its array of copper pans hanging on the walls. Towards nightfall, though, this reserve seemed to dissolve in an almost violent yearning for intimate sympathy and expansiveness. Soon the family would be seated around the great marble table in the kitchen, the blue gas flame flaring over their heads: Elia, as usual, bent over a book, while he ate, deaf to everything around him. Even the cloddish Brondis vaguely felt that there was some kind of affinity between the house with its high skylight windows gleaming out towards the dark fields, and the young woman, framed in a ground floor window (from that same kitchen window from which she was waving to them to come in) who on an April morning in 1900 had greeted the dawn of the new century.

Then she had opened a half-closed shutter, and had thrust open another with

such force that it slammed against the wall; just at that moment a clear shaft of sunlight shot from the horizon, striking fire from the copper vessels in the gloom and bathing the figure of the woman at the window in a fleeting tawny blaze of glory. In the same pose, with the same bad-tempered expression on her face (Elia had heard her sighing as she got out of bed; from the beginning of their married life she was accustomed to rising at dawn, half an hour before he began his studies, to prepare coffee), with the same full mouth, made for smiling, but bitterly compressed in a straight line, Gemma, her ample bosom in a sort of silk breast-plate, appeared in the life-size photograph which, on their moving into the house in Via Coramari, had been installed on top of the Pleyel pianoforte, in the 'best room' (but here of course the male members of the Brondi family had not been invited, and indeed never would be, for their rude peasant shoes would have played havoc with the red-tiled floor, so carefully waxed). Only the background was different in the beautifully-framed picture. Instead of pots and pans, variegated foliage in a whitish mist. The house seemed quite different from the opposite side, the one which faced Via Coramari.

It was a three-storied house built of dark red stone, and looking at it, it seemed incredible that the countryside, that world which a calm segregated bourgeois life induced one almost to forget (that far-off strange world—so thought Elia's relations—from which Gemma had come) was only a few yards away beyond that last row of aristocratic houses with which Dr. Corcos's could hold its own.

His relatives—the Corcos, the Josz, the Sanguinetti, did not seem at all intimidated or irritated by the shining brass plate with its great black letters on the front door in Via Coramari. And although at first they had severely criticised Elia for having married a *guià*, as they described her, in the jargon they used amongst themselves, and what was worse, a peasant girl, and though in due course they had disapproved of his leaving the ghetto where he was born, to go and live in that street so far away, so 'foreign', yet it was with a certain feeling of pride, pride of sect and caste that when they came to call they always used the main door, so proper, so respectable, so fitting to their veils, their little hats pierced with long hat pins, their silk dresses with trains, their frock coats, top hats and bowlers. The aspect of the house, the silence in the street, similar and yet different from what they had been used to in the streets in the centre of the town (the gay animation of Via Ripa Grande—the wide main street parallel to Corso Po, which was joined down by the asylum by Via Coramari, seemed to be stilled as if by magic at the very door, where the grass once more undisturbedly took root in the flinty road) did much to reassure them that in spite of everything Elia was still one of them. He was still a Corcos.

Their attachment to Elia became closer as he became more and more well known in the town. And, as they seemed to make it quite clear, not only because he was the son of that good-for-nothing, Salomone Corcos, that insignificant little merchant who deserved to be ignored from every point of view, and who in his whole life, had only succeeded in begetting children —twelve of them—and had finally been reduced to living on his youngest child, Elia. When his relations realised that the latter had no intention of disowning his people or being converted, and that, with his rising fortunes, the name of Corcos would gain added lustre from which they might all benefit indirectly, they were quite ready to excuse and even justify all he had done, including his marriage with Gemma Brondi. For Gemma was surely of very little importance in his life if their union did not prevent him from being, at the age of little more than forty, head doctor at the hospital, personal physician of the Duchess Costabili, and since the untimely death of her husband, perhaps something more than her personal physician. Every summer he would accompany her on a tour of the most famous and luxurious European spas—Switzerland, Germany, France—where she diligently took the waters: and, of course, it was not Elia's fault if, on his return, Gemma was unable to appreciate sufficiently the elegant and often expensive gifts which he brought her from abroad; one year an

astrakhan muff, another year a magnificent pigskin travelling bag, another year a genuine Paris model and so on.

If he had been more sociable, Elia could have easily gained a Chair at the University. He seemed to regard his services in the retinue of the Duchess Costabili purely as a duty he owed himself since they paid him so lavishly. Oh, no, it could not be said that he was anxious to get on in the world, or that he was skilled in the use of arts other than those his natural intelligence afforded him. Not for nothing had he been born in F. instead of B. If he had played his cards more carefully, he might have been admitted to the Commercial Club from which in fact he had received cordial invitations to join (but, of course, he had refused them), and not even the snobbish Union Club frequented by the most exclusive aristocracy—the Costabili, the Maffei, the Canonici, the Del Sale, the Scroffa, etc., would have dared to blackball him. All in all, considering the man's character and tastes (sometimes in the evening you might come across him in the garden, his glasses pushed up on his furrowed brow, a threadbare jacket over his morning trousers, absorbed in the ritual of mysterious injections into the bark of his fruit trees), perhaps Gemma was the most suitable wife for him. She was devoted, good at running a home, a wonderful cook, and a worker second to none. He was a shrewd and prudent man and had married her not only to avoid the consequences of a youthful error, during a lonely tour of night duty in the hospital with a high-spirited girl (in F. there were so many similar cases without there being any necessity for a visit to the Mayor), but as a well-calculated step, in accordance with a clearly-cut plan. From a pale, sickly, ailing youth, apparently destined to die prematurely of consumption, as he was at the age of thirty, in ten years he was transformed into a man of flourishing if not robust appearance.

And everybody agreed that Elia's decisive and indeed marvellous recovery was principally due to Gemma's cooking. Of course he was a scientist, and in point of fact a positivist. What if there was a time when he had refused to go on paying his dues to the community, stating that his conscience prevented him from pretending a faith he did not possess? After all, one could turn a blind eye to that, because when it came to the circumcision of his sons, he had not only consented to the operation, a simple one in all truth, but had insisted on being present while it was being done, and had voiced his approval of a custom which corresponded to obvious elementary rules of hygiene and as such had been wisely included by the ancients in their religion. What did it matter, when it came to the point, if he were a self-confessed free-thinker? The only occasion he attended the synagogue was for the service of intercession for his dead father. He certainly had a distinctive way of keeping people at a distance, and you should have seen the way he so obsequiously and gravely bowed to the congregation as he passed along the rows of pews. Exaggerated courtesy, of course, with more than a tinge of irony.

Of what importance, then, were his eccentricities, his independent behaviour, as long as he continued to conform more or less to convention? Why, when, in 1904, his poor little fair-haired child Reuben died of meningitis at the early age of six, it was a pleasant surprise and a consolation to everybody when, despite his usual indifference towards religion, Elia insisted that his younger son should be buried next to his grandfather Solomon in the neat, verdant old Hebrew cemetery. And this, in spite of the fact that as if in gratitude for Gemma's undeniable virtues as a mother and a wife, he had resolved in 1925, when it was clear that she was incurably ill with cancer, to marry her before the Vicar of San Guiseppe who had responded to the emergency call, and through whose offices she had latterly resumed her attendances at church after so many years. For, of course, Elia was not the dry unfeeling man, the monster of egoism as he sometimes seemed, etc., etc. And then—his relations recalled—had not Gemma's behaviour been extremely painful on the occasion of the death of her child when not only had she insisted on following the funeral on foot, but afterwards when they had finished filling in the grave, she threw herself on to the mound. She had interrupted the prayers of the

officiating rabbi, Dr. Levi, shouting the while that she did not want to leave her baby, '*il mié pòvar putìn*' there. A mother is always a mother, but a father too has his rights. Could Gemma have really been serious in wanting Reuden Corcos buried beyond the wall in the district cemetery where it takes days to trace a tombstone? And then what did all the innumerable Brondis mean by weeping and making such a fuss? Did the whole lot of them have to come to the funeral? They must have invited their friends and distant relations because practically none of them knew that it was wrong to stand bareheaded. And who was that little woman over there? The one with the black shawl and bony old maid's fingers trying with Elia and Jacopo (already so like Elia, a reserved, refined dark-haired, pale-faced boy, a real Corcos), to raise Gemma, as she shook her head in obstinate protest?

'Cesira Brondi? Ah, Gemma's sister.' There was always someone who would say that, happening on Cesira at the front door in Via Coramari, and at first pretending not to recognise her. The old maid would look up sullenly from beneath her shawl, and as the door opened, operated from the upper floors by means of a rope, she would readily make way for the visitor. She would stand on one side with averted eyes (at that very moment she would be thinking of her mother who had not come with her for she boasted that she would never go out). Cesira's shrinking reserve came instinctively and she could do nothing to resist or conquer it.

V

Late almost every afternoon, and every Sunday, for years and years, Cesira, a slight figure in black, a dark shawl round her head (the one she wore regularly to church), was to be seen hurrying from the direction of the distant crowded Via Ripagrande, emerging from the blue haze into Via Coramari and finally arriving at the '*buen retiro*' which was for Elia a haven of tranquillity so conducive to study and to his need for reflection and peace. As she climbed the stairs to the first floor, she thought to herself: 'We Brondis have nothing in common with the proud taciturn Corcos—such difficult people to understand. Why, then, do I always come back here?'

The very interior of the house reflected the obvious incompatibility in the temperaments of the two families. Thick tomes of medical science, slimmer ones of light literature, historical and geographical atlases, dictionaries, microscopes, barometers, wooden and metal stethoscopes, strange and complicated studio lamps—all in striking contrast to the great farmhouse cupboards, the gigantic andirons such as are seen only in the country, deep copper pails from Friuli, hanging from hooks in the kitchen ceiling, immense sooty chimney-pieces, the rough red brick floors, and at the head of the stairs, over the door leading to the loft, a solemn picture of Moses the law-giver. All this conglomeration of discordant elements awaited the mellowing influence of time, its gentle imperceptible caress like a misty veil. The house was a continual reminder that the people who lived in it, or who passed through it, were isolated strangers to one another. On every occasion before seeing him, Cesira thought of Elia.

In the great kitchen where the pots and pans gleamed like flames on the walls, Elia would appear back from his annual summer trips to Baden-Baden with the Duchess Costabili, who would have no other doctor with her. He would return with the autumn, possessed by an overwhelming desire for peace and quiet—'*O rus! quando ego te adspiciam?*' he would murmur, now and then looking up from his studies, after a day in the hospital or the surgery, and then, gazing out over the garden and the walls separating the garden from the fortifications, still further beyond the fortress itself till finally his eyes beheld incredulously the great gold-lined clouds in the sky over the airport. His gaze would linger till the clouds faded out of sight. That was how she always pictured Elia, invariably seated at his work-table beneath the window in the corner of the room near the gas stove, deep in thought, and unconscious of the fact that someone might be speaking, lost in an impenetrable solitude. 'Why do I always come here?' she kept on saying to herself; what point could there be in frequenting the great kitchen full of servants, nurses, neighbours, relations rich

and poor, children and grown-ups, often noisy and quarrelsome, where even Gemma, a figure to be respected, a heavy bunch of keys dangling from her girdle, with her sudden and violent outbursts of anger, was powerless to break through the barrier of reserve, which Elia had chosen to adopt. (Sometimes he would mockingly turn to her and say: '*Vieni, diletta, appressati —schiava non sei, ne ancella . . .*'[1] What was the good of coming back there? she kept on thinking. The only place for her would be in the corner, where she would have to sit mechanically plying her crochet hook in the glimmering and fitful light.

So she fretted, at the same time deriving morbid satisfaction from her dilemma, and realising that, in spite of herself, she would always return. But she had nothing in common with the surroundings, and whenever full realisation came to her, she wished she had her mother's will-power, her mother who never went out except to attend church. She wished she could be like her brothers and father, who, once inside the garden gate (whenever they had been sent for by Gemma), always refused to come up, and at most only condescended to go into the woodshed on the ground floor. They did come up on a very few occasions after the First World War, when it seemed that so many things would change, the rich be levelled down to the poor, peasants to the townsfolk, and that everybody would more or less be the same, even in matters like language and dialect. But generally they were contented to stay in the woodshed. After all, that is why they had come, and as they set to, chopping the great logs into firewood, the whole house resounded from cellar to loft. But they would never come up, even at mealtimes, and so meals had to be taken down to them—enormous plates of pasta, salami, raw onions, which they ate with oil and salt, and wine . . .

No, the Brondis had never had anything in common with any of the Corcos excepting perhaps—and in the end Cesira always clung to this idea—Elia's father, old Solomon Corcos, the former corn-chandler who, married three times, had had twelve children, the youngest being Elia. On that August night in 1888 when Elia came home, his mind made up to tell his father of his engagement to Gemma, the old man, near to tears, had said: 'For the love of Heaven, where have you been so late? You must have known I couldn't sleep': and then before he heard the news, he looked at his son, bewildered and apprehensive, for the boy seldom came home so late or entered his father's room before retiring. 'Engaged?' he wailed, but deep down he was glad—'but you haven't even got a bed to sleep on.' At the time of his favourite

[1] Come, my love, draw near—thou art not my slave nor my handmaiden.' (A quotation from *Aida* at the point where Amneris mockingly and deceitfully addresses her slave Aida.)—*Ed.*

son's marriage, he was a widower for the third time, and although very old and sentimentally attached to the ramshackle old house in Vicolo Torcicoda which he had never wanted to leave, and where he had lived for years with his family, he decided after considerable opposition to go and stay with his son in Via Coramari. He might have had some presentiment, for very shortly afterwards he died there, almost a hundred years old. His photograph was given a place of honour in the best room opposite Gemma's. It showed him smiling just as he did so often when alive. As time passed, Elia became more and more like the photograph of his father, except for an entirely different expression in the light grey eyes behind the same type of spectacles. The old man seemed to be smiling in his kind, gentle way at Gemma, who looked crossly back at him from the opposite wall.

During his lifetime, he had always cherished her with fond affection and treated her with a sort of old-world gallantry, rather like an Elia grown old, an Elia who, thirty years after Gemma's death, could at last approach her freely, humanly, understandingly, and when recalling her merits, could spare himself those half-sincere tears he shed once before dinner as he softly sang to himself a 'romanza' from *Trovatore*. That smile seemed to say—'Don't be angry—everything will be all right, you'll see.'

Ah, yes, old Signor Corcos was a different type of man altogether! Like Elia, he was extremely courteous—at every opportunity he would bow or doff his hat, and was always ready with a pretty compliment. But his little formalities were always free from affectation and irony. He always insisted on giving way to the other person. If, for example, he met a woman of his acquaintance in the street, no matter if she wore the plumed hat of the great lady or the shawl of the working-class drudge, as a sign of respect, mingled with admiration if she were beautiful, he would stand aside, hugging the wall, or if necessary step off the pavement into the roadway. Although deeply religious and a strict observer of the tenets of his faith (Elia's marriage must have been very painful to him from this point of view, but he never gave any sign of his inward hurt) yet, in the house, he never discussed his own or anybody else's religion. He usually sprinkled his conversation liberally with ghetto jargon which only partially resembled the F. dialect, being full of incomprehensible words.

But words like *hamor* (donkey), *hasir* (pig), *magnod* (money), *mahod* (beating), *pehat* (fear), and so on did not seem mysterious or strange when he used them, but were somehow coloured by his perpetual optimism and goodness. On being asked the time, he would take from his pocket a large old-fashioned Roskop timepiece (which Elia subsequently inherited), and, before stating the time, would put the watch to his ear and listen with a rapt expression on his face. There was one subject upon which he held forth at the slightest provocation. Although he was the mildest man you could wish to find, he was nevertheless a fervent patriot, and so he often spoke of Garibaldi who had been the inspiration, the idol of his youth. He would describe the General's voice (Elia remembered the melodious, rather high-pitched voice of the man in the red shirt, the starry vault of heaven over the crowded square, the enthusiasm of his father and all the people around: then there were mistier memories of an even remoter past —the white-uniformed Austrian soldiers some time before 1859 walking up and down in front of the Cathedral, and his father holding his hand, and saying: 'Poor chaps, what fault is it of theirs?') that blood-stirring voice which he, Solomon Corcos, somewhere in the midst of a swaying, delirious throng, had been privileged to hear rising from the balcony of the Town Hall where the Hero of Two Worlds had stayed for a week. That was a night so many years ago—in June 1863. At the time Solomon had weighty family responsibilities—twelve children. And yet he had the feeling that a single word would have been sufficient for him to leave home and follow the General, if necessary to the ends of the earth. And who would not have done the same? The vehemence of his feelings (he was inclined to stammer a little) left him breathless. But the sparkle in his eyes was more eloquent than speech.

How could she, Cesira, ever forget his

kindness to her? Whenever he met her about the house, he would say: 'You are Cesira, Gemma's sister.' And he seemed so happy that he had remembered her name, unaided, since his memory had been failing for some considerable time. Knowing that she came from a family of market-gardeners, he never failed to inquire about the price of produce—how much were peas, grapes and corn? Cesira remembered his white curls, shining like silk, his large characteristic nose, and she recalled with a strange and eager pleasure the peculiar smell of his clothes: a smell of the countryside or of the 'fruits of the earth'—as he called them. A patriarchal odour—biblical as it was defined many years later, in 1944, by the German S.S. Captain Wengler, stationed in F., when talking to a fellow-officer about Professor Corcos, '*Jude—ja*—', the distinguished doctor who had attended him before being deported to Dachau. The captain recalled how Corcos, near collapse through weakness—after all he was ninety—bent over him to examine his bared chest, and listened to his heart-beats. It was then the officer noticed that the old man's body gave off a strange perfume, reminiscent of meadow grass—the Bible—that was it—Enoch, Ezekiel—and so on.

It was that age-old scent of the grain which, even within those alien walls, seemed to speak to her of her own home.

VI

Love was something quite different, as Cesira, too, well knew—something cruel and dreadful, to be spied on from afar, or to dream about with closed eyes. Certainly from the first, her feeling for Elia was neither passion nor an envious yearning for love. It was rather a constant inescapable yearning for that life which was denied her. It was a feeling which had never brought her joy whenever she entered the kitchen where Elia, in the corner near the window, regularly studied until dinner time. He pored over his papers, apparently oblivious to all else. But in reality perhaps nothing of importance escaped the scrutiny of his jet-black piercing eyes. As she entered, she felt compelled to avoid his calm glance as he raised his eyes for a moment from his book. And, as if in self-defence, she instinctively thought of Salamone Corcos. He had been so different from them all, not only from Elia—who, nevertheless, was gradually becoming more and more like him. Then the times in which Salamone lived must have been very different from the present. And around the memory of the good old man (she always remembered his expression of affectionate concern in the portrait hanging in the best room, as if he were trying to console Gemma) she slowly created in her fancy a wonderful golden age, when God spoke equally to all men, without distinction of race, class and religion.

And yet, in the long summer evenings, as she sat at the window looking out on to Via Coramari, while from the nearby church of San Giuseppe rose the deafening, intoxicating clangour of the bells (the others including Elia and Gemma were still in the kitchen enjoying while they could the cool garden air), Cesira loved to imagine herself an old woman, waiting there behind the shutters for Elia. All the others were dead, but she pictured herself living with Elia . . . as his housekeeper, of course. They were both old, perhaps two of the oldest people in town. She imagined, too, that at a certain age he had given up his bicycle, also his books (*'chi librazz'*—Gemma used to say, pointing scornfully at them) and instead habitually walked home from the surgery, down Corso Po and around the road skirting the fortifications. But a man's footstep echoing on the pavement below would be enough to make her start—and rouse her, sighing regretfully, from her day-dreams.

The future, however, was destined to dash all her fanciful hopes. Gemma died in 1925 and was laid to lonely rest in the District Cemetery. But Elia, too, had gone. It was as if the gloom surging along Corso Po to meet him as he absentmindedly advanced towards it (the darkness of Dachau) had prevented him from finding his way home.

Elia always had a strange look—sometimes his eyes gave the impression of being quite unseeing. That famous night, after telling his father about his proposed marriage, he had gone up to his room—an attic with a skylight looking out on to the rooftops—he had observed the first pale

gleams of dawn in the sky. Not a sound in the house—the town slumbering at his feet—a pale rosy light touching the roofs out there in the east—and a thrill of pride in his heart. And he had given up all idea of going to bed for that night. He would study instead. After all, was not Science his real mission in life?

Yes, he had a strange look. It was as if he observed people timelessly and from a great height, and so to him they all seemed blurred and interchangeable.

An Extract from

LONDON 1949

JEREMY BROOKS

My eyes! My eyes! I have burnt my eyes!
O Sir, I am not a god that you should look over my shoulder!
I have come to the point where I can no longer
Hover over the pathway, direct my feet round every boulder.
This is where I find myself, many many years and years older,
But no wiser, no more responsive, and no stronger
After ill-omened journeys.
I have burnt my eyes.
I have been looking into the centre
Of the bright aching fire where I see my origin
O so undeniably humble and unpretentious!
But I am here in acute deserts, in obvious winters
Holding me in abeyance. I can be no longer adventurous
In precocious havering between sin and no-sin,
Between knowledge and knowledge of no-knowledge,
Between self-hope and self-hate, between love
And the sorrow of no-love. I opened my pledge
With a conceit of conception; now I only have
The conceit of no-deception.
My eyes! My eyes!
I have burnt my eyes!
O Sir, I am a blind beggar;
No matches I offer your fire, no immediate prospect
Of satisfying your so curious desire. Only I am eager
To be put away with the ones who have tried, who will try,
Trying with the desolating prospect of failure after failure
To recapture the moment we lost you, to redeem
A fault not ours, a sin not ours, a dark lie
O Sir, please not to be laid much longer
On our weak and so obviously failing shoulders!

APOLLO IN THE ICE

R. H. BOWDEN

When the night is empty
and the stone boys heave
criss-crossing shoulders on the frozen sky
to break out morning, then the earth in ice
rolls over splendour, turns to green glass green
in cages, green in pebbles, white
air bubbles in the water's fold.

Then, through the iron drag-net of the trees
contorted fingers wield the glowing cross:
then eyes
unnumbered separate the green
girls' kisses from the water's skin.
In blank
the sky looks down at earth incrowned,
inrimed, in frost with love's heart waking in a lonely womb.
In ice
Apollo held unbroken,
naked gold,
half-crucified,
spreads through the frozen world
his image into images of blood
red-marbled in the vesicles of ice.
With scarves
of air surrounded, sealed
in prismed gold,
he, held burning from the open sky, is bone-
and jewel-ribbed among the realms of ice.

Now the day is empty, and the stone boys heave
criss-crossing shoulders at the crux of gold
in water, at the fire in ice.
The green girls kiss
the thorns black fingers where they break through rain;
the stiffened grass
rusts in its frosted scythe, and twists
to dumbly fall. The stone boys roll
the grains of water round their hollow sky:
with spears they thread
the gold limbs of Apollo dropped from ice.
And the cold
blood
from his broken
body
drapes their
Stone.

The night remains. O night,
Quiet, conquering night in which he finds
an everlasting sepulchre in the moon . . .

ARCHIMEDES

FRANCIS CABUCHÉ

The Great Prince, King of Lemons, Lord of Love,
Sat in the mid-night in his grove
Amidst his treasures, where the hand of God
Had taken light and twisted it
Into the fake white flowers beyond the mist
Called stars. On either hand his wives
Assumed they lived the first of their nine lives,
And sheathed their claws, content to wait
Until their master grew too old to love.
And love—the winged cat flying in the face
Of beauty, the inhuman laughter like
A mystic sound that can caress
A woman's brain to revelation—
And love? They knew their Midas master loved
Them, for his touch had turned their breasts
To gold like sunlight, and their children ran
Quick-silver footed. Yes, their Lord
Was satisfied: he had nine wives,
They had nine lives, and he was eighty one.

In the Grecian sun he sat
Conjecturing upon the waning world,
Nursing his bitter treasury
To fruit and bear him bitter sons.
And on his ninetieth birthday (he was wise)
He took another wife with nine
More lives, and he was satisfied.
He was Archimedes whose tally showed
A meagre profit of ten better sons
Begotten by ten wives. Should each
One live one life and share his father's labour
Fairly, love and brotherhood
Would yield a mighty Eden. He was wise.

But even this almighty man
(So near perfection) died. Some say it was
His own design, part of a perfect plan.
Like Buddha, differing in manner
Only, he would sit and meditate,
Not on his navel but upon his hands.
His logic, simple and direct,
Assumed eight fingers and two thumbs, the sum
Of all his learning. For each wife
A finger or a thumb, and for each son
The same:—ten wives, ten sons, ten fingers.
So perfect was his reckoning he smiled . . .
But what of years? His numbered ninety,
And to count the tens upon his fingers
(For he was no cheat)
Left him with a thumb to spare.

He was the Great Prince, King of Lemons, Lord
Of Love, possessor of a grove
Whose parallel did not exist on earth.
He could not bear the imperfection of
A thumb to spare. But to be satisfied
He must be ninety nine and take
Another wife with nine more lives,
Who'd bear the customary son.
What then? Eleven wives, eleven sons,
Nine years and ninety—but eight fingers and
Two thumbs! Life was illusion. So
He chose to die, a sacrifice
To truth.
A Great Prince and a great man this,
The King of Lemons, Lord of Love, who sat
Long in the mid-night in his grove
Among his treasures, where hand of God
Had taken stars and twisted them
Into some semblance of the Light.

NEAR CORINTH

ROBERT CONQUEST

O nymphs representing ideas,
Come from that Platonic cave
Into a blue-washed air,
Or under the green of the sea
Lie in the lapping wave . . .
Believing them a false ideal image,
The poetic version of a metaphysic,
I yet think it would scarcely be more strange
To see them here beside me in the classic
Mediterranean light, real sea and place
With odour and sound (the citrus and cicada),
Than what we do so normally, but seems
No less unnatural as a view of matter:
The interpretation of a moving face,
Skin over bone and muscle, tinged with blood,
To intricacies of personality,
Pervasiveness or subtleties of mood . . .
O satyrs of a deeper cavern
On whom those sweet nymphs dote,
Say if such clear eyes can
Extract the mind of a man
From the masks of a god and a goat.

The World of Books

AMERICAN DIPLOMACY, 1900–1950 By George F. Kennan.
Secker & Warburg. 12s. 6d.

Reviewed by Christopher Hollis, M.P.

This is a most excellent and important book —the more important because of Mr. Kennan's recent appointment as American Ambassador to the Soviet Union. Mr. Kennan has already won for himself a distinguished place in the literature of American diplomatic history as the Mr. X who published two important articles in *Foreign Affairs* in July 1947 and April 1951, on the 'Sources of Soviet Conduct', and 'America and the Russian Future'. These articles, their authorship now confessed, are reprinted as an appendix to this book.

He begins with the Spanish-American War and the Open Door in China. The popular version was that America by her superior virtue kept herself isolated from the absurd conflicts of the base Europeans. Mr. Kennan shows that in truth America owed her isolation and her freedom to the fact that she was in reality—whether she knew it or not—defended by the British fleet. The Spanish War marked a new stage in American history because the United States, as a result of it, with the acquisition of the Philippines, for the first time acquired territory which had no prospect of ever becoming a State and which was quite outside the North American area.

The American proclamation of an Open Door in China was, Mr. Kennan shows, academic and unimportant because America was in no way prepared to take any steps against any other Power which closed a door, or indeed were Americans prepared to refuse to take advantage of concessions which other Powers had obtained and to do business through their ports. It therefore naturally won no gratitude from the Chinese.

In the First World War the best result for America—as indeed for the world—would have been that Britain should have defeated Germany without American intervention. With the hope that this might happen, America at first declared her neutrality, but, when it became obvious that a victory for unaided Britain was improbable, the United States was compelled to intervene. Mr. Kennan pokes a little gentle fun at his fellow-countrymen for their excessive refusal to recognise that there was any difference of principle between the belligerents so long as they were neutral and their exaggeration of that difference of principle as soon as they themselves came into the war. Substantially the same story was repeated in the Second World War, with the comical addition that, while American opinion refused to recognise the war as a war for democracy at its beginning and hailed it as such at its end, in fact at the beginning the Anglo-French alliance could fairly claim to be a democratic alliance, but at the end the war was being fought mainly by, and for, the arch anti-democratic Power of Russia.

The Second World War has clearly left a situation where there was no longer even a plausible possibility that the powers of Western Europe could defend themselves unaided, or that Great Britain, unaided, could any longer by her naval power defend America. Therefore America has been compelled to abandon her traditional interests. Nor are any of the attempts of some American leaders to limit her interests likely to lead to much success. The United States is now, inevitably and whether she likes it or not, a World Power, interested in every problem of the world. The danger against which Mr. Kennan now wisely warns his fellow-countrymen is that of what he calls 'the legalistic-moralistic' approach. He thinks that it is a folly to harp too much on the parallelism between the individual and the State and the State and the world. In any normally-constituted State the overwhelming

majority of its citizens has everything to lose from anarchy. But in world politics States vary very much in their attachment to an existing world order. Some have everything to lose by its collapse. Others have little to lose. If all the Great Powers act together, as they did at times in the Concert of Europe in the nineteenth century, then they can perhaps really impose their will on the small Powers as a policeman imposes his authority on the criminal. But, when the great Powers are divided, then the parallel breaks down. The forces against the order of society are too nearly equal to the forces in its support for the matter to be settled without calculation. We are often more likely to get a satisfactory solution if we think as little as possible of the legalistic aspect, denounce as little as possible the wickedness of the enemies of established order and deal with the problem frankly as a problem of power politics.

All this is surely true and most important. There is so wide a gap between the true lessons of history and popular rhetoric. In popular rhetoric, the cause of democracy is supposed to be the cause of peace. In history, periods of democracy have always been periods of large and constant wars, and the present period is no exception. Aristocracies and autocracies have often refused to go to war, but history can provide no instance of a democracy which refused to support a war. It provides, it is true, plenty of instances of democracies which refused to prepare for a war beforehand and thus perhaps to prevent it. But they always supported it on the day.

In the same way, unless and until we have some world authority to promulgate and to enforce moral law, it only creates confusion to talk too much about a universal international obligation to keep things as they are. To the nations with the higher standards of living, such an obligation may seem self-evident. But the general process of history has seen a constant extrusion of the rich and sterile peoples by the more fecund new nations with their lower standards. There is no self-evident reason why this process is less moral than the other. We are only likely to preserve peace if we deal frankly with nations as they are and not as we think that they should be.

About the future of Russia, Mr. Kennan is profoundly sensible. He sees no need to be blankly pessimistic. Extreme, inhuman regimes do—given time—modify themselves, if only we can avoid conflict. One cannot foretell how in detail, but human nature will surely reassert itself. On the other hand, the form of their new society the Russians must work out for themselves. The amount that the foreigner can do to influence it is small. But the trouble, of course, with this slow process is that at the end of it there will doubtless be a Russian people to be saved. But whether in the satellite countries there will be any nations left at all—whether the whole population will not have been transplanted—is more uncertain.

SIX EXISTENTIALIST THINKERS

By H. J. Blackham. *Routledge & Kegan Paul.* 15s.

Reviewed by Illtud Evans

In philosophy, as in so much else besides, each generation may be said to get what it deserves. However much the academic philosopher may seem — or want — to separate himself from the organised affairs of other men, inevitably he reflects (if only in a distorting mirror) his own time and place and the dilemma of man's existence within them. The existentialists, by definition (if indeed definition be allowed within a system that is not a system) are at least explicit in their concern about the individual's anguish in face of the world we know. For them, however unlike in all else, philosophy is in the end an autobiography.

Existentialism is a convenient but deceptive label, and the labels of philosophy are more adhesive than most. Its popular expression has been by way of the theatre and the novel and even by that of geography (the cafés of St. Germain-des-Près are marked in up-to-date guides to Paris as 'existentialist', though Sartre, it is explained, has migrated to Harry's American Bar on the other side of the river). The professional philosopher, who is in any case the existentialist's principal villain, is naturally inclined to reject the serious intentions of thinkers who unite in evolving philosophies of an unintelligible world, and this with a rhetoric and masochistic *Angst*

which make communication, the give-and-take of argument, unlikely or impossible. Indeed, Jaspers (as summarised by Mr. Blackham) states that 'the effort of the whole enterprise is to light up personal existence, not to build an argument.'

Mr. Blackham has given the English reader much of the material for judgment, for the principal work of the Continental existentialists (and it is largely a Continental movement) remains untranslated. He begins appropriately with Kierkegaard, whose reaction against the academic philosophies (and against that of Hegel in particular) and whose insistence on the indispensable need of absolute choice ('My whole life is an epigram calculated to make people aware') have profoundly influenced Mr. Blackham's other five—Nietzsche, Jaspers, Marcel, Heidegger and Sartre. A summary and sober account of philosophies so diverse, and of their very nature so unresponsive to exact analysis, is a useful achievement at any level. And if, as seems likely, existentialism will mark no important evolution in philosophy itself (which cannot afford so intransigent a contempt for the function of human reason and the necessary truths it can hope to reach), it is at least a tragic document of a tragic time, and as such must be respected.

THE YOUNG WAGE-EARNER: A study of Glasgow Boys

By T. Ferguson and J. Cunnison. *Oxford University Press* (for the Nuffield Foundation). 8s. 6d.

Reviewed by Gordon Rattray Taylor

The authors (both dons at Glasgow University) traced, during three years, the careers of all boys leaving Glasgow schools on 26 January 1947—a group which, as they point out, excludes some five hundred young people who, because of mental or physical disability, had been educated in special schools, and also all those who had already been committed to Approved Schools at that date. They gathered data concerning their physical, scholastic and personal qualities, their health, industrial progress and leisure activities, and the district, home and family circumstances in which they grew up.

'Omnibus' surveys of this type, having no organic coherence of their own, drive the reviewer into the easy, inadequate course of tickling the reader's fancy with a few unrelated but apparently startling statistics. Thus in the present case one might say that one in five of these boys came from 'broken' homes (i.e. homes from which one parent was absent for reasons other than illness or death); that one in three came from overcrowded homes (defined as more than three persons to a room); that 11·6 per cent were convicted of crime (principally theft) during the period. But the serious reader wants to know whether the survey has thrown new light on some fundamental matter, such as the causation of delinquency, or on some aspect of social motivation. But this is just what one cannot say. There are plenty of promising scraps of information, which look as if they *might* be going to prove illuminating. For instance, delinquency was higher than average among those who were not members of a social group, such as the Scouts, and lower than average among those who never went to the cinema. Or again, two-thirds of the boys found their work interesting and the interest of the work seemed to them a more important consideration in choosing a job than wages, prospects or security. Moreover, only 11·3 per cent wanted non-manual work.

But we look in vain for some interpretation, some kind of theory, behind these tantalising correlations. We can understand that delinquency was associated with a slum background, with a broken home, with being undersized and underweight and with being the child of an unskilled father. But which was the cause? Does the father's unskilled status explain why he lives in a slum and why his offspring is underweight? If so, we must reconcile it with the fact that a background of overcrowding and broken homes did not tend to go with lower wage-earning capacity in the boys—though a slum background did. Again, it is puzzling that, while the heavier boys tended to earn higher wages, and slum boys lower, yet slum boys had fewer absences from work for sickness.

The survey contains a mass of data, from which later workers may possibly

be able to quarry something for their purposes, but it does not itself advance understanding of the dynamics of the processes at work among the subjects studied. The social sciences, like the natural sciences, must set out with certain clear-cut hypotheses in mind.

SEX AND MARRIAGE

By Havelock Ellis. *Williams & Norgate.* 12s. 6d.

Reviewed by John Stewart Collis

Most prophets are windbags. And the longer they live, the windier they become. Think of Carlyle, Ruskin, Wells, Shaw. Not so Havelock Ellis—in spite of his many volumes and his enormous range. He often gives us a page where others would do us a volume—and say more. Yet he took all knowledge for his province and strolled around it like an Emperor.

Though economic in statement, he had much to say, and since his death in 1939 has nevertheless gone on publishing books. His indefatigible editor, John Gawsworth, has been coping with some seven volumes of uncollected material. The last two volumes appearing in 1950 were *The Genius of Europe* and *From Marlowe to Shaw*. The present book deals with that particular subject which he made his major work, the understanding of sex. Since his fame in that field exposed him to endless further questions, there was much that he had still to say. *Sex and Marriage* ventilates some of these problems.

Glancing through the contents, a reader ignorant of Havelock Ellis might quail: The Future of Marriage, The Attitude Towards Divorce, The Sexual Life of Women, Parents as Sexual Advisers, The Question of Population, The Problem of Sexual Potency, and so on—this might sound forbidding. But then the writer is Havelock Ellis—the master of prose. There is something for each reader. Our increase-the-population pundits may like to be reminded that the command to increase and multiply was 'addressed to a world inhabited by eight people'; and the chapter on potency, in its up-to-dateness, and understanding, and reassurance, should be read by all who have some potency skeleton in their cupboards.

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LETTERS OF EMILY DICKINSON

Edited by Mabel Loomis Todd, with an Introduction by Mark Van Doren.
Gollancz. 21s.

Reviewed by Jeremy Brooks

To be occasionally aware, to the utter limit of awareness, of the world around one and of the astounding fact of one's own existence in it, is sufficiently rare a gift to make whoever possesses it distinguished; to be thus aware continually, waking in wonder and living in the continual excitement of breathing and seeing, is a phenomenon: repugnant to some, enchanting to others, but curiously strange to all. But it is only if chance, or a desire to express their delight or terror, makes artists of such phenomena, that we are able for a moment to share their odd, disturbing vision of the world.

Emily Dickinson was such an artist. And in her poems, first published four years after her death in 1886, we can, briefly, enter her enchanted world. The present reprint of her letters, first printed in Boston in 1894, allows us to slip for even longer periods behind her wide-open eyes.

It is a real excitement; words become new, untarnished things; insects take personality; the fact of living becomes a new experience. Lovers of Emily Dickinson's poetry will not be disappointed, but they may find, as I have found, a sad and serious flaw. For Emily Dickinson, living almost as a recluse, hardly ever leaving her house and garden, occupied wholly with her meditations and writings, slides gradually but distinctly from fineness to pedantry, from pedantry to preciosity. 'The mere sense of living is joy enough,' she said. To quote would be unfair and misleading, and since this criticism must not detract from my emphatic recommendation of this unusual book, readers must find for themselves the point at which their tolerance begins to stick. That it will stick, somewhere, I have no doubt.

There is an admirably concise new introduction by Mark Van Doren. The typography and production are, for Gollancz, unusually dull, but that extraordinary vision between the pages may, for some, make up for the incomprehensible price.

THE BOOKMAN'S LONDON

By Frank Swinnerton. *Wingate.* 15s.

Reviewed by Henry Baerlein

Most urbane and full of delightful information is this book by one to whom no aspect of his beloved profession appears to be unknown. We are regaled with sketches of various publishers who have had the good fortune to employ Mr. Swinnerton—and he can be charmingly malicious at times. One may regret that in his account of *The Yellow Book* Mr. Swinnerton does not mention Ella D'Arcy, one of its most gifted contributors. Her handwriting, by the way, was of such magnificence that today it is only rivalled by that of Mr. Nicholas Bentley, and Mr. Swinnerton, who with lamentable modesty omits to have a specimen among his otherwise perfectly embracing illustrations. He mentions that Grant Richards, when seated, had a very distinguished appearance and that he was flamboyant. Such was his repute as a *bon vivant* that when he came out to ask Dr. E. J. Dillon at Aix-les-Bains for his Memoirs, we two and the manager of the hotel strove for hours to think out a lunch of which he would approve. One day at the Authors' Club the youthful Swinnerton was being entertained by Arnold Bennett, then at the height of his fame. As they sat down at the lunch-table Bennett pointed to one whom he hailed as the best-selling novelist in Great Britain. This was the now almost forgotten Charles Garvice. So thoroughly did Garvice know his public that, when Ford Madox Ford once asked him why in a book he had made a Major the superior officer of a Lieutenant-Colonel, he replied that his readers knew that the word 'Major' means 'greater than' and they would be uneasy if in rank anyone should be above him. Ford, by the way, not mentioned in this book, was brilliantly depicted by Mr. Swinnerton in a recent article. Another book must surely be on the way.

MR. KENNETH ROBINSON

On the Contents Page of the February issue, Mr. Robinson's name appeared by mistake in the list of reviewers. I hope this has caused him no inconvenience; he was, of course, the author of one of the books reviewed.—*Ed.*

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HAMISH HAMILTON

EDWARDIAN THEATRE

By A. E. Wilson. *Arthur Barker.* 21s.

Reviewed by Roy Walker

Two other recent surveys of the English stage in this century—by J. C. Trewin and Ernest Short—take in the Edwardian decade with which it opened. A. E. Wilson's chronicle is about nothing but those ten glorious years of Terry and Tree, Shaw and Galsworthy, the hey-day of musical comedy, comic opera and the halls. He writes from the glowing memories of an enchanted small boy who haunted those uncomfortable shilling galleries. Irving considered gas lighting kinder to the stage than the new-fangled electricity. Although Mr. Wilson is still practising on a London newspaper, his enthusiasm likewise outshines the paler gleam of criticism.

'If the Edwardian period did not represent the Golden Age of our theatre,' he writes, 'it was not only the most exciting decade of the present century but one of the most interesting, momentous and important in the history of the British theatre' —a dictum with which one may heartily agree; but not, surely, with Mr. Wilson's attempt on the next page to uphold the judgment, understandable when William Archer made it thirty years ago, that the theatrical period from the beginning of the century 'would be judged by posterity to be greater than the Elizabethan.' This is, however, the measure of Mr. Wilson's deep affection for the Edwardian stage, and it infuses much of what he has to say with a human warmth lacking in what might theoretically be considered more objective abstracts and brief chronicles of the time. And that is another way of saying that the book itself is of the theatre.

Heretics are treated, perhaps, with undue severity. John Masefield is quoted as complaining that there 'is no theatre in London set apart for the performance of Shakespeare' or built for the right production of Shakespeare. Mr. Wilson thereupon resents any attempt 'to convert the entire theatrical system to the service of Shakespeare alone', an extravagant allegation that he presents as a warning against 'losing one's sense of proportion'! But the profits to the reader of Mr. Wilson's devotion outweigh any incidental loss.

EMILE ZOLA

An Introductory Study of his Novels. By Angus Wilson. *Secker & Warburg.* 10s. 6d.

Reviewed by John Cocking

This well-informed, fresh and independent book claims that Zola is 'the close companion of Balzac, Dickens and Dostoievsky'. If his defects rank him a little lower, it is suggested he offers 'a wonderful enveloping world as they do', and he has a strange clarity of direct vision which they lack. The author effortlessly lifts the novels from the black hole labelled 'Naturalism' and sets them out in full critical light on the plane of imaginative creation. He maintains that Zola's Naturalism and his ridiculous theory that the novelist could be a scientist and the novel a controlled scientific experiment, were merely shields behind which the artist sheltered his sense of inferiority and aggressively thrust his visions upon the world. If Zola attacked the melodramatic improbability of the 'Romantic' Barbey d'Aurevilly, he opposed it with 'scenes of melodrama almost as improbable, yet always more convincing and more real because of his simple and clear view of the structure of society from which no *fin-de-siècle* weariness or terror of social change could shift him.'

Mr. Wilson's critical approach is itself simple and clear, and his inquiry thorough and unblinking. The favourable verdict relies, perhaps, too much on the assumption that a rich neurosis served by imaginative power is the secret of great art. Neurosis can be limiting as well as revealing—Dostoievsky's and Proust's conceptions of love show how, in their different ways; show, too, how important is the writer's attitude to his neurosis. The strength of Zola's novels, Mr. Wilson suggests, 'lies in their evocation of a total atmosphere, what in psycho-analytical discussion of dreams is often called the "affect".' This is quite reconcilable with the generally-held view that Zola's undeniable quality is his melodramatic power. We may still have doubts about the value of any particular 'affect' and of Zola's melodrama. But Mr. Wilson puts an interesting and challenging point of view in a very attractive book.

Ready Shortly

A Short History of Switzerland

By E. Bonjour, H. S. Offler *and* G. R. Potter. *Demy 8vo, 416 pp., with 7 maps in the text. Probable price 35s. net*

The book attempts to set out in plain and readable outline the story of the development of Switzerland from the earliest times until the present day. Politically, Switzerland is, as at present constituted, the creation of the nineteenth century, and this century and the present receive rather fuller attention from Professor Bonjour than the earlier years when the country grew from a nucleus of communities united only for defence and independence into a confederation which, at the height of its greatness at the beginning of the sixteenth century, was almost a great European power. The book embodies the results of recent research and attention is paid to economic, artistic, and cultural matters as well as to geography and political history.

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NEW NOVELS

BARBARY SHORE By Norman Mailer. *Cape.* 12s. 6d.
LEAVES FOR THE BURNING By Mervyn Wall. *Methuen.* 10s. 6d.
SPRING'S GREEN SHADOW By Cecily Mackworth. *MacGibbon & Kee.* 10s. 6d.
MY HEART SHALL NOT FEAR By Josephine Lawrence. *Heinemann.* 10s. 6d.

Reviewed by Stevie Smith

In Brooklyn Heights is a tall brownstone rooming house. It is very dirty and the landlady is telling Mikey Lovett: 'Oh, I was in burlesque, I was a queen. They used to announce me "and now presenting the svelte siren of sensation." They'd all go for me.' She is called Guinevere. Mikey Lovett has come to this rooming house to write his books. He is a war-wrecked young man who has no memory, but a plate on his head and a grafted complexion. So with this empty mind on the Present, he waits for the seven devils to rush in. One of the room-mates is Hollingsworth, a yellow-haired dapper beauty, a police spy, with loving feelings for the educated gentlemen. He watches with love and hatred the educated McLeod—envies, loves and traps him up. For McLeod is a political irritant, once a Party Member, then working, he says, for the Authorities (American); but then out of it again and taking with him the 'object' they all want. The women are emotional in their lives of phantasy; Guinevere is this dirty fat slut 'all men go for'; her three-year-old child, Monina, watches the lovers and dances coquettishly, naked, with a fig-leaf gesture; then weeps. Once Guinevere had a dream she was a turtle. 'And you know I thought I was a turtle, can you make that out, Lovett? . . . Monina, you leave Mr. Lovett's things alone. That kid's got hell in her blood. She takes after me. Honestly, Lovett, the things I've done.' The crooked genius that sprawls across these pages is as untidy as the house, as life-size in fever and bewilderment. In the end there is a long political interrogation of McLeod by Hollingsworth. Mikey is present at this and so is the intellectual young madwoman, the drunken Lannie. She has had shock treatment and talks nonsense shot with poetry and insight. The electric light shines in the eyes of the questioned; but it is a sham affair, made up of police memories and sofas of the psycho-analyst. And the biter is bit. 'I have your permission to be long-winded?' asks McLeod. The inquisitor replies: 'I would like the story to be complete without being extended beyond the bounds of a fellow's patience, if you don't mind.' When a writer of Mr. Mailer's gifts writes a book about the chaos of our times, there is courage and virtue in it and the power and pleasure of truth.

MR. MERVYN WALL has also the power and desire to throw truthful light on painful situations. His hero Lucian has the misfortune to be intellectual, dreamy and poor, so he cannot have a good job or be happy in a bad one. In a leaky shed he works as a minor official in the Irish Post Office. The rain comes through the roof and his colleague flees to the bottle. Lucian is suspect of the authorities. 'I know his kind,' says the Senator, 'no respect for either Faith or Fatherland. *Canaille*, that's what the French call them. I read it in a book about France. . . . Why didn't he stay at his Greek?' Joining up with some old university friends—an artist who gave up art for banking, an engineer whose road-building was stopped because they would not cut down the fairy tree—Lucian goes on a drinking tour. The Senator comes too. They are drinking to drown the memories of youthful pride—except the Senator—they are middle-aged now and defeated, laggards of love and of fortune. On the drinking party the old whining patriot who bothers them is thrown out of the window and breaks his neck. The state of Ireland is sorrowfully displayed by this author. Lucian, visiting a lunatic aunt in

*SANTHA RAMA RAU

recommends

THE

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MACMILLAN

an asylum in Dublin, sees the forlorn beauty of the eighteenth-century ruined houses. 'We build now,' he says, 'with the architectural ideas of the maker of a wedding cake who has been told to do the job cheap. Mediocrity is the first of all the virtues, intellect the one thing to be really feared.

> For intellect would make us proud
> And pride bring in impurity.'

That the occasion of the story is the funeral of the poet Yeats adds point to the grim jest. Mr. Wall has wit but the note is melancholy.

MISS CECILY MACKWORTH is a distinguished writer who has already made a name for herself with a book about Villon and his poetry and one about her experiences in the Palestine troubles and her last one about the extraordinary girl Isabelle Eberhardt who travelled in poverty as an Arab in deserts. This new book is a novel, rather autobiographical one cannot but think, poetical too, and serious in its stretch. She starts off bravely: 'My earliest memories of my mother date back to my fourth year.' Laura, this remembering four-year-old is a lady's child, growing up in the Welsh countryside. Her mother is a bitter, miserable, hectoring, snobbish creature, devoted to horses and to her husband, a wounded returned soldier from the First World War. They are very much together and the child is pushed out of their companionship. In spite of Laura's mother's horror of the native Welsh, she is sent to the Welsh parson for Latin lessons. He is also pretty miserable because he was once a great scholar of mighty promise living in Paris, but he felt the devil was in his intellect so he must crush it down and stamp on his beautiful growing mind. So back he comes to Wales and his devil-ridden religion and his son (called Idris) hates him and so does his daughter (called Mair). Mr. Howells, this parson, is fond of his little pupil Laura and he seems a sad broken creature. He is a secret drinker. His son, now home from the university, drags his drunken unhappy father out of the house into the street so that the neighbours can come and jeer at him, which is what they do. In the end he goes off and kills himself and Mair says it serves him right. Where the Greeks would have devoted an Oresteia to this extraordinary behaviour, Miss Mackworth makes nothing of it. Even when the young ones go to Paris, taking their hatreds with them, and Laura, flinging out of an unsatisfactory love affair with Idris, tears up Mr. Howell's early diary, Miss Mackworth thinks she is being 'free', but she is really being a nuisance because it was the only copy and the Paris professor had given it to her to edit because she was hard up. These blunted perceptions in a book that is so talented and poetical are odd.

MISS JOSEPHINE LAWRENCE makes the mistake of thinking that childbirth and the daily round are enough to make a book out of; it may seem hard luck, they are not, seeing they are so essential a part of life, but the fact is they need a lot of transcending—seeing above, about, around and below—and that is what they do not get here. The story is American and they are all hard up, and there are a lot of relations and babies in small rooms, very overcrowded, and the old mother is always afraid something is going to happen; the beautiful English girl, Vi, is always crying to go home, Ruth is sick, and Patience has just had her first baby in St. Luke's Hospital. 'Slim and narrow again after months of bodily clumsiness', she lies there worrying about the rent. You know? Yes, we know. It wants relating to something else. One sighs for an intellectual young mama reading the Ethics of Spinoza while being delivered, or rising selfishly above the duty world of pots and pans and babies to go and study the habits of the lepidoptera, saying 'My butterflies come first.' Just one little fingerlift of a wink or jeer in the face of 'it's what we were made for' school, one token stretch of a Gulliver in his pin-prick shackles. After all, plenty of women do this; one would like to hear about them. Did not De Witt recite Virgil on the rack? Men or women, it can be done. One thinks of the hilarious ramping romping girl and her tearing twins in the Glastonbury Romance. But Mr. John Cowper Powys of course is a Titan. The mere shadow of his tall hat, his flying coat-tails and his Welsh club might teach these ladies a wider vision.

THE CONFORMIST

By Alberto Moravia. *Secker & Warburg.* 15s.

Reviewed by P. M. Fitzgerald

The Conformist is Moravia's first serious attempt to deal with the mentality of a rank-and-file Fascist official and with the Resistance movement in Italy, yet, typically enough, the book raises no political problems whatever. This detachment in a great European writer makes the reader feel rather foolish, which is good for him, I think (as is the brilliant portrait of the 'good' University Professor who, with a sincere love of humanity, directs the Resistance activities of his students from a Paris flat and avoids exposing himself to any danger whatever). Politics, in fact, are not Moravia's concern. From the first we are plunged into the peculiar, glassy, speciminising atmosphere which is characteristic of all his novels, the famous *sincerita naturale degli eventi*, the coldly correct study of sexual behaviour and the effect of human beings upon each other.

Marcello Clerici (like Luca in *Disubbedienza*) is to some extent outside the ferocious middle-class jungle in which he lives and in which behind 'the drawing-room for receiving friends, the sham Persian carpet, the china that her mother had given her, the vase of flowers in the hall, the double bedroom with its false Empire furniture bought by instalments' a peculiar struggle for survival is waged with silent concentration. Marcello has been conscious, ever since he was a boy, of an abnormality which borders on perversion. He is victimised by Lino, a frightening unfrocked priest turned chauffeur, and on the spur of the moment shoots Lino and kills him. After this his life's object is to attain normality, to become an 'ordinary person'. He joins the Fascist party and becomes a petty official in the Intelligence Service. He marries Giulia, a pretty, stout, commonplace girl who comes from the most ordinary of homes, a flat in the suburbs which fills him with complacency 'since by himself he would never have been capable of making his home look so ordinary.' But this desperate attempt to identify himself with ordinariness comes to nothing. His superiors send him to get in

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touch with an exiled Italian Liberal leader, Professor Quadri, and to arrange, in fact, for Quadri's murder. Quadri is living in Paris and Marcello combines his 'errand' with his honeymoon; before long he is involved in a nightmare of sexual complications, the normality, through which he had hoped to communicate with others, crumbles away, and the novel ends not with the cynical resignation of *Disubbedienza* and *Amor Conjugale*, but with the death of Marcello, his wife and child in an air-raid.

In spite of some amazingly brilliant passages, *The Conformist* is not one of Moravia's best novels. The central character is unconvincing and this is fatal to the whole book, but it is a very good introduction to his work to those who, perhaps, only know him from *The Woman of Rome*. For all its realistic approach, and deliberate understatement, the *effect* is not realistic, but strange beyond all conception, and this is not simply due to the ruthlessness and extravagant sexual behaviour of the characters, since we have read a good many novels dealing with ruthless and extravagant sexual behaviour, but they are not at all like Moravia's. What then constitutes the unique Moravian atmosphere? Partly the cold correctness and accuracy, a kind of fascination of disgust; partly his lack of concern with *motives*, partly the disconcerting and yet familiar way in which his people, even while we look at them, change and reveal different selves.

This device was invented (probably) by Michelet for his Histories and was made famous in the *Recherche du Temps Perdu*. The first novelist to use it in England was Wilkie Collins, whose characters in *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone* turn out to be other than they seem (quite apart from the actual *dénouement* of the mystery) in a manner never attempted by Dickens. Recently it was most successfully used in a brilliant novel, L. P. Hartley's *The Boat*, but to Moravia it seems second nature.

Thus, in *The Conformist*, Marcello wants to marry Giulia simply because she is so simple, ingenuous and normal—he is attracted even by her sentimental old mother and by the china dogs in the living-room—only on his honeymoon does he discover that she has been the mistress (since she was fifteen) of an unpleasant old lawyer; more characteristically still, Giulia's love for Marcello, almost the only honest emotion in the book, appears in the end as a failure of the imagination. Quadri, the professor in exile, is a protean figure, 'a face in which everything was false, a veritable mask', alternately gentle and deceitful, despicable and heroic: Lina, his elegant wife, suddenly turns out to be a Lesbian. Lino, who has been shot dead, comes to life again. Even the normality which Marcello gropes for so painfully is for ever changing its shape. At first it appears as a comfortable bourgeois marriage; then, 'since there was no love in this obscure and reeling world, like a stormy twilight, with its ambiguous figures of men-women and women-men . . . he would persist in his intention to create a family together with Giulia . . . this was normality, this makeshift, this empty form.' But even this patched-up reason for existence fades away, and at last, in the cold dawn of the Liberation, driving away from Rome, he sees normality simply as the attempt to recover, or explain away, our lost innocence: and innocence must be lost, if not in one way, then in another. All this is reported by Moravia without charity and without pity. There is, perhaps, one touch of sentimentality at the very end.

Alberto Moravia is, above all, a professional writer and the acquired skill which never deserts him must give pleasure to anyone who cares about writing at all. His control is astonishing, in particular his power of maintaining interest in several characters, each of whom reacts upon and modifies the others: the dinner-party scene in *The Conformist* where Professor Quadri entertains his wife, Marcello and Giulia at a rather dull restaurant in the Latin Quarter is a staggering piece of virtuosity. In this, and in the plainness and ease of his style (it is criticised in Italy as an absence of style) Moravia is a school for novelists.

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